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THE WONDERFUL POCKET

AND OTHER STORIES.

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THE WONDERFUL POCKET,

CHESTNUTTING

AND

Other Stories.

By CHAUNCEY GILES.

PUBLISHED BY JOS. R. PUTNAM,
3 WEST TWENTY-NINTH STREET,
NEW YORK.
1903.

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PREFACE.

This little volume is an attempt to embody some useful truths in a form to interest the young. Three of the stories were written without any expectation of their publication, and read to a company of children. The interest they created, and the readiness with which the children caught the truths the stories were intended to teach, suggested the idea that they might be useful to a larger audience.

With these explanations, this little volume is sent forth to the great public of childhood and youth, with the earnest desire that those who read it may glean from its pages some golden grains of good affections, and some silver coins of truth, to deposit in their "Wonderful Pockets" for use in daily life.

C. G.

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THE WONDERFUL POCKET.

One cold Christmas Eve, Charles Lee was sitting by the fire, looking earnestly at the coals as they burned cheerfully in the grate, sometimes sending out great volumes of smoke, and then bursting into flame, and lighting up the little room in which he was sitting, and making its naked walls look quite ruddy and cheerful. But none of its pleasant light entered Charles' mind. He looked gloomy and sullen, and occasionally muttered something to himself, as if he was angry at everybody.

His mother was sitting near him, busily engaged in finishing a piece of work. Mr. Lee had been dead a year. He was sick a long time before his death, and the little money he had been able to save

while he was well, had been spent during his sickness, and his wife and children were left without a cent.

Mrs. Lee was very industrious and economical; but she found it very difficult to support herself and children by her own labor. The most that she could do was to procure the bare necessities of life.

Charles went out every day, and got all the little jobs he could find to do. He would run on errands, and carry light bundles, and do anything else in his power to earn a few cents for his mother. Sometimes he succeeded very well, and what he earned was quite a help to her.

But that day, when of all others he wanted to earn the most, he did not get anything. Everybody was so busy in selecting and buying presents for children and friends, and in making preparations for Christmas, that no notice was taken of him. Almost every one he met had packages full of pretty things for presents. One man had a little wheelbarrow

under his arm. Ladies carried baskets filled with packages done up in nice papers. Little girls and boys were carrying home the Christmas gifts they had selected for their little friends.

Charles stopped before the window of a toy-shop, and gazed long and wishfully at the many cunning and pretty things that had been placed there, to attract the attention of the people as they passed by, and he could hardly keep from crying at the thought that he could not have one of them. It made his mouth water to see the candy and other delicious things to eat; and bitter feelings rose in his mind at the thought that his mother was too poor to buy any of these nice things for him, and that he had no friends to make him any presents.

Charles was a very good boy in the main, but he was sometimes selfish and envious. The contrast between his own condition and that of many others had a particularly unhappy effect upon him to-day. He thought it was wrong that he could not have

beautiful presents, as well as other children. He went home in a very bad humor. He was cross to his sister, and pushed her away when she came near, though he was generally very fond of her, and took great pleasure in playing with her, and often spent the evening in telling her what he had seen and done during the day; but to-night he was so much under the influence of bitter feelings, that he could not bear to have her near him. He knew that his mother did everything she could to get good food and comfortable clothing for him, but he seemed to forget it all, and said very petulantly that he did not see why he could not have nice toys and handsome clothes as well as other children; and he thought it was too bad that he could have nothing for his supper but bread and molasses.

His mother tried to soothe him as well as she could, but she did not succeed very well. He was too much excited to listen to what she said. After a while he got up and went to bed, but he could not

sleep; angry feelings kept rising in his heart. He thought it was not right that he must work so hard and live so poor, and have no beautiful things, when a great many boys whom he knew dressed well, and, when they were not going to school, had nothing to do: they seemed to be so happy, walking and driving around the streets. He envied them, especially at this time, when almost every one had a holiday, and many presents from parents and friends.

After a while he began to think what he would do if he was rich. He would have ever so many fine clothes, the greatest abundance of beautiful toys, and as many good things to eat and drink as he wanted. He would not work another day. He would live in a large house, and have elegant furniture. He would get a pair of the handsomest horses in the country, and live in grand style.

He lay with his eyes shut while he was imagining these vain things. But he became so excited by his wild thoughts that his fanciful picture seemed almost

to be real. He opened his eyes, expecting to find himself in his grand house, with everything beautiful around him. But he was still in the old chamber, and all his visions had fled.

He saw something else, however, which interested him more than his foolish waking dreams. A woman of wonderful beauty stood before him. She looked a little like his mother, and a little like his sister; but she was far more beautiful than any one he had ever seen before. Her face shone with a light that made the whole room bright.

One would naturally suppose that Charles would have been frightened at the appearance of such a splendid woman in his little chamber, coming, as she seemed to, out of the darkness. But he was not. There was something so kind and innocent in her face and manner, that he did not feel in the least afraid. Besides, the thought immediately flashed upon him that she had come to help him.

"And so you want to be rich, do you, Charles?"

she said, addressing him in a very sweet voice, and in the kindest manner.

"Oh! yes," he replied, with great eagerness; "I should like to be rich above all things. Will you give me a whole bagful of gold, so that I can buy everything I want, and not have to work any more?"

"No, Charles," she replied; "I cannot give you any money, nor can I tell you how to get it. But I can give you something a great deal better. I can give you a pocket, in which to keep your money when you do get some."

"Is that all?" said Charles, in a disappointed tone. "I have a pocket now, that will hold more than I can get to put into it. A pocket won't do me any good."

"But the pocket that I will give you is a very wonderful one."

"Is it full of gold?" Charles eagerly asked.

"No," said the angel. "There is not anything in it; and never will be, unless you put it in."

"Then I don't want it. I want money for myself and mother." And a look of great disappointment settled over his face.

"But you don't know anything about this pocket yet. If you use it as I tell you, you will soon be as rich as you need to be."

"What is there that is so wonderful about it?" said Charles.

"Everything you put into it will always remain there, though you take it out ever so often, is one of the wonderful things about it," she replied.

"What!" said Charles, whose curiosity now began to be greatly aroused. "If I had a whole handful of gold in this pocket, and if I should take it out and spend it, would the gold still remain in the pocket?"

"Yes, indeed it would; and the more you spent, the more you would have."

"That would be a wonderful pocket truly," said Charles; "and worth more than the richest pres-

sents in the world. But I don't see how it can be, that the gold would remain in after it had been taken out."

"No, I know you do not. But still it is true, and there are a great many other things about the pocket as wonderful as this."

"What are they?" inquired Charles, his curiosity now thoroughly aroused.

"One remarkable thing is, that you can only put the money into it which you have obtained by doing good to others. If you attempt to put anything into it you have gained from selfish motives, the pocket will disappear. Another wonderful quality is, that you cannot get anything out of it to spend foolishly, or for any purpose that will not be useful to yourself or to some one else. If you attempt to do so, it will become invisible."

Charles did not think that these qualities added anything to the value of the pocket. But the possibility of having a pocket which would never be empty,

was a possession too valuable to be rejected, and he begged her to give it to him.

"You shall have such a pocket," she said. "But remember, you will not be able to see it until you get something to put into it; and neither you nor any one else can see it, except when you take something out or put something into it. You will find it on the inside of your coat, and of every coat you wear, and I hope you will have it well filled before another year. And now I bid you good-night, and wish you a very 'merry Christmas.'" So saying, she vanished out of his sight.

Charles felt so happy that he could hardly keep from getting up and dancing. He looked at his coat, that was lying on a chair near him, to see if the beautiful lady did anything to it; and he was about jumping up to see if he could find the pocket, when he recollected that it would be invisible until he had put something into it. He longed for the morning to come, that he might go out and earn

something to put into it. He lay a long time thinking over the many beautiful things he would buy, and how he would astonish all the boys by pulling out whole handfuls of gold; but finally he fell asleep.

He woke early in the morning, and jumped up without being called; and, before putting on his coat, he looked at it very carefully to see if he could not find some signs of his new and wonderful pocket. When he found he could not, he felt a little disappointed; for although he remembered what had been said to him, yet he thought he might, perhaps, see some signs of it. But his old coat looked just as usual. He put it on, and did some things for his mother very cheerfully; thinking all the time how soon he would show her something that would make her very glad. He would come home with a whole handful of gold, and would bring so many nice things besides for his mother and sister, that they would be astonished!

While he was eating his breakfast he laughed aloud several times, at the thought of what he would have for breakfast the next morning. His mother noticed that he was very much excited, and asked him what was the matter. But he said, "Nothing," and yet he was almost crazy. He kicked the kitten, and turned over a chair, and came very near upsetting the table. He asked his sister if he should bring her home a new dress and bonnet and shoes, and promised his mother as many new things as he would be able to purchase if he had a handful of gold. His mother could not imagine what made him talk so strangely, and she was afraid something was really the matter with him. It made her very sad to see him so foolish.

In a little while he went away, promising to come back soon, and show them what he could do. As he went along, he was all the time thinking about what splendid things he would soon have. A fine carriage and horses passed him. "Ah!" he thought,

"I will have a finer carriage than that, and more splendid horses. The harness and the carriage shall be all covered with gold!" And so, whenever he saw anything handsome, he would say to himself, "I will have something better than that."

He came to a very fine house. "That is a pretty good house," he said; "but wait and see the one I will build!" As he met some of his companions, he hardly deigned to notice them, the foolish boy!

He kept thinking of his pocket, and longing to get some money to put into it, that he might see it. For he thought, if he could only make a beginning, that would be all that was necessary to get any amount of money he wanted; for what he put in would always remain there, though he should take it out ever so often.

After a while he saw a man going along with a load of coal, and he followed him, hoping to get a chance to put the coal into the cellar, and by that means earn something to put into his pocket. To

his great joy, the man who had bought the coal agreed to give him a dime for putting it in.

He went to work as hard as he could; and, when he caught up a large piece of coal, he would think, "I will have lumps of gold as big as that, some day!"

When he had finished putting the coal in, the gentleman gave him a dime. "There," he thought, as he took the money, "that is the last load of coal I will ever put into the cellar: I will soon have somebody to do it for me!" And he ran off into an alley to put his dime into his wonderful pocket. As he was running along, he resolved that, as soon as he had put his dime into the pocket, he would keep taking out dimes until he had a dollar; and then he would get a gold dollar and put into it. Then he would keep taking that out until he could get a gold eagle, and then he could always have as much money as he wanted at any time. As soon as he found a place where he thought no one would see

him, he unbuttoned his coat, and thought, "Now for the pocket!"

He looked carefully, first on one side, and then on the other; but he could see no signs of it. He became very much excited; and he began to be afraid that it was all a dream, and that he would never have such a pocket. He took off his coat, and looked all over it, inside and out; but he could find no pocket except the old one that had always been there.

When he had looked over his coat again and again, examining every seam carefully, and could not find the pocket, he began to cry, he was so disappointed. He could never get any of the fine things he had been dreaming about. He looked at the dime he held in his hand, and thought he would throw it away, he despised it so. What was a dime to one who expected to have a handful of gold?

He put on his coat, put the dime into his old pocket, and went slowly along toward home, hang-

ing down his head, and looking very sad and disappointed. He heard children crying, "Christmas gift!" but he paid no attention to them. He got home to dinner; but he did not bring a turkey with him, nor any new dress for his sister, nor any present for his mother. He had nothing but a paltry dime.

His mother saw that a great change had taken place in him; and she was afraid he was going to be sick, or that something dreadful was about to happen. He ate his dinner with a gloomy face, and would hardly answer a question his mother asked him. He gave her the dime with a toss, as though it was good for nothing; and, after a while, went out again. He began to despair of ever having a wonderful pocket, after all his hopes. He forgot that he could never find it, to put anything in it, unless he had obtained the money by doing something that was not selfish — while all the morning he had been trying to get something to put

into his pocket for the sake of finding it, and his little foolish heart had been filled with pride at the idea of the great show he would make. That was the reason he could not find it.

But Charles, on the whole, was a pretty good boy. He was honest and faithful in his work, and was a great help and comfort to his mother. He never could bear to see any one imposed upon. If he saw a large boy attempting to hurt or in any way misuse a little one, he always took the small boy's part. It is not strange that he was very much excited, and that his head was almost turned by the idea of having such a pocket, and the immense amount of money he supposed he could so easily obtain by means of it.

As he was going round a corner of the street, he found an old apple-woman in great distress. Some bad boys had overturned her apple-stand, and were trying to pick up the apples and run off with them. He jumped around as fast as he could, and helped the woman to pick up her apples. He did not once

think about his pocket, or any pay for helping her. He pitied the poor woman, and only thought of helping her.

"There," he said, when the apples were all picked up and placed upon the stand again, "the boys did not get many of them; and I do not think they will come back again."

The woman offered him an apple for helping her; but as she had lost some, and was very poor, he would not take one, though it made his mouth water to think of eating one. He thanked her, and told her he would not take any.

As he was going away, a gentleman who kept a store on the opposite side of the street, and who had seen the whole performance, called to him; and Charles went into the store.

After asking his name, and telling him he was glad to see a little boy act so unselfishly, he gave him a quarter of a dollar, and told him he hoped he would always remember to help the unfortunate.

Charles thanked him, and felt very happy, not so much for the money, as at the thought that he had done some good to a poor woman, and gained the approbation of a good man. As he turned to go out of the store, he thought he noticed something bright on his coat, as though there was a light within shining through it. He unbuttoned his coat; and there, on the inside of it, he saw a cunning little pocket, just large enough to slip in his quarter! How his heart danced for joy! It was no dream, after all! He really had the wonderful pocket! He slipped the quarter in, and it shone like burnished gold, and seemed to make him warm all over. Then he saw why he could not find his pocket in the morning. It was because he was selfish. He was thinking of himself, and not of doing good to any one else.

"Now," he thought, "I shall always have a quarter at least; for the beautiful lady told me, whatever I put in my pocket would always remain there, however often I took it out." But, strange to say, he

forgot the other wonderful quality of his pocket; namely, that it would be invisible, and he could find it only when he wanted his money for some unselfish purpose. But he very soon discovered his mistake.

He came to a toy-shop, and he thought he would buy some toys. But, when he came to look for his money, he could not find it: pocket and quarter had both disappeared! Now he felt worse than ever. He wished he had put his quarter into his old pocket; then he could have had it when he wanted it. But now he did not know that he should ever see it again. He did not think that his pocket was much of a gift after all. What was money good for, if you could not spend it when you wanted it? He determined that he would not think any more about it.

As he was going home, quite disappointed and sad that none of the bright anticipations of the morning had been realized, he passed by a grocery; and, as he saw a great many nice things to eat there, he thought of his mother and little sister, and wished he

had his quarter to buy them something to eat. Strange to say, he never once thought of himself, but only of his mother, who worked very hard, and his little sister, who could not go to school because her clothes were not good enough, and who had but very few nice things such as many little girls have; and the tears started in his eyes at the thought that he could not do anything for them.

At that moment, he happened to look at his coat, and saw it shining again! And, sure enough, there was his quarter, as bright as gold! He took it out; and, after he got it in his hand, he saw there was still another in his pocket! Then he was perfectly delighted. He went into the grocery, and bought some tea for his mother; and, when he had paid his quarter for it, he thought she would want some sugar; and, when he looked into his pocket, there was a quarter ready for him! So he bought some sugar. He kept thinking of one thing after another that he knew his mother needed very much, until he

spent three dollars. Whenever he took out a quarter, there was always one remaining.

When he had bought all the things for his mother that she needed at that time, he saw some candy; and he thought, "Now I will buy something for myself." But, when he looked for the quarter, it was nowhere to be found. It had gone, pocket and all! He looked around, expecting to see the sugar and tea and other things disappear; but they did not; and he took them up, and carried them home. He was somewhat disappointed at not getting the candy; but, when he thought how much pleasure so many nice things would give his mother, he felt quite happy.

His mother was very much surprised when he handed her the things he had bought for her, and she questioned him very closely as to the manner in which he had obtained them. He told her he would tell her all about it after supper. So they had a nice cup of tea, and some candles to give them light; and they enjoyed the supper very much.

After the things were all cleared away from the supper, Charles told his mother all about his wonderful pocket, and how he had obtained it. To prove that he told the truth, he was going to show it to her; but of course he could not find it. His mother seemed to understand about it, however; and she was very glad to know that her son had been presented with such a wonderful gift.

There was no happier family that night in the whole city. Charles could hardly contain himself for joy. Sometimes he would sit, and look steadily into the fire for a whole minute, as though he saw something very beautiful in it. Then his face would be all covered with smiles, and his eyes looked as bright as his pocket when he put his money into it. Then he would burst into a loud laugh, and jump about the room, half mad with delight. He would hug his pocket or his old coat; for he could see no pocket in it then. He was thinking about the many beautiful things he would buy with his money.

After a while, he went to bed. When he pulled off his coat, he folded it up carefully, and laid it on a chair. He never had so much respect for it before. "What if somebody should come and steal it?" he thought. "But if they should, it would do them no good; for they could never find the pocket. There are some good things about its being invisible. Besides, it would be no great loss to me; for the pocket is to be on the inside of every coat I get." So he let it lie upon the chair, and got into bed.

When it was all dark in the room, he would open his eyes to see if there was not something bright about his coat; but he saw nothing. Foolish boy! —he did not know that the pocket was not in his coat, after all, but merely appeared there. He was quite startled, in a little while after, by something which seemed to show that his pocket was in his side or breast: for while he was thinking of the old apple-woman, and feeling glad that he had a chance to help her, and rejoicing that he could

make his mother and sister happy, he felt something warm about his heart, and a light seemed to shine through the bed-clothes, and almost to make the room light—but he did not suppose it could be his pocket; and after a while, he dropped to sleep.

When he awoke in the morning, the first thing he did, he looked to see if his old precious coat was where he put it. He found it was safe, and it did not appear as if there was anything very wonderful about it. He could not help examining it very sharply, when he put it on, to see if he could not discover some signs of his pocket. "It was very strange," he thought, "that it could come and go so quickly!" and he really wished it would remain where he could see it all the time.

He had a pleasant breakfast, and was very happy all the morning. He was thinking how soon he would make an entire change in the appearance of things. His mother should not work so hard, and his sister should go to chool. Strange to say, he did

not think about going to school himself, though he could hardly read, and could not write a word! He was trying to contrive how he could get some more money into his pocket, that he might take it out the faster; for it seemed to him now rather small business to be taking out quarters, though, a few days ago, he thought that a quarter was quite a large sum of money.

He knew it would do no good to get money just for the sake of putting it into his pocket; for then it would remain invisible. So he wandered around all day to find some chance to do good, that he might get his pocket filled; but he did not succeed, and he began to think it was going to be more difficult to get money in this way than he at first supposed. If he offered to work for nothing, that would not be of any use to him; if he worked merely to get money to put it into his pocket, that would not help him in the least; and he found it almost impossible to work without thinking of his pocket. He went home at

night very much disappointed: he had not earned a cent all day; and he did not see how he could ever get anything more into his pocket, or out of it.

So he spent a whole week. He did not even help his mother as much as before: for he almost always earned something every day; but now he did not get a cent. He could not bear to work all day for a few dimes, when it would be so easy to put his hand into his pocket, and take out quarter after quarter. Why couldn't the lady have given him a pocket that would always keep in sight, and open, so that he could take out just as much money as he pleased, and just as often?

Foolish Charlie!—he did not know that the qualities of his pocket which he did not like were the most valuable of all, and absolutely necessary to prevent it from spoiling him: and even now it came very near doing it by making him an idle and useless boy; for instead of going to work as he ought to have done, and trying to make himself useful, he

was all the time trying to devise some way to get something into or out of his pocket.

One day, he went to the grocery where he had bought so many things for his mother the week before, and asked for some more tea and sugar for her. He did this to see if his pocket would not appear again. If it did, he thought, he would take out as many quarters as he could hold in his hand, and then slip them back again; and, after that, he could take out a whole handful at once. So he called for a quarter of a dollar's worth of tea; and, when it was weighed out for him, he expected to find his pocket: but it did not appear; and he was obliged to tell the grocer, when he asked for his pay, that he thought he had some money in his pocket, but he believed he must have lost it. So he was obliged to go away without his tea, or without finding his wonderful but very troublesome pocket.

What do you think was the reason that his pocket did not appear to him as it did before? It was be-

cause his first thought was about himself. That was really why he asked for the things, and not because he cared so much about his mother. If he had cared more for her than for himself, he would have gone to work, and earned what he could; and would have been glad to help her a little, if he could no any more.

He now began to give up all idea of ever seeing his wonderful pocket again. All his bright visions of unbounded wealth faded away, and he wished he had never known anything about it. His old coat was getting to be all rags, and he must have another. After a while, his mother found a place for him in a store, where he could make himself useful, and earn a little something every week. He commenced work with a heavy heart. How could he work for a few dollars a week, when he had expected to have all the money he wanted by just putting his hand into his pocket?

But every day he became more interested in his

duties; and, in time, he seemed to forget that he ever had such a thing as a wonderful pocket. He was faithful in doing his work, and every Saturday night he carried home his week's earnings to his mother. She had bought him a new coat; and though they were very poor, yet they succeeded in making a comfortable living. Charles' mother felt very sad sometimes because she could not send her children to school, and give them more comforts and privileges: but she saw no way of doing it; for, even with their assistance, she had to work very hard; and sometimes, when she was weary, she felt very much discouraged.

After he had been in the store some months, Charles was sent by his employer to the river to carry a small package to the steamboat. As he was going on board, he met a lady coming from the boat with two little children. The plank was so narrow, that the mother and her children could not walk side by side. She tried to have the little girl, who was the oldest, go

before; but she was so afraid she did not dare to do it. While she was trying to urge her along, the other one, a little boy about two years old, slipped from her hand, and fell into the river.

Charles saw that the child would be drawn under the boat, in a moment, and be drowned. Without stopping to think of the consequences to himself, he plunged into the river after him, though he was a very poor swimmer. He seized the child, but soon found that he could do no more than keep himself and the child from sinking. The current was strong, and was fast sweeping them both under the boat.

The mother screamed, "Oh! my boy, my boy!—save him, save him!" Everybody shouted to everybody else to do the same thing; but no one did anything but shout, as is often the case at such times. Charles struggled to keep himself and the little child from going under the boat; but his strength was not great enough to swim with such a load against the current.

Just as he was disappearing, and every one thought they were both lost, Charles struck his hand against something which proved to be a rope floating in the water, and fastened to another boat which lay alongside. He grasped it with one hand, and clung to it with all his might, while he held the little boy in the other, and called aloud for help. A boat was soon dropped down to him; and he was taken out of the water, still holding to the little boy.

They were both almost drowned. Charles was so much exhausted that he could not stand for some time. The people on the boat gave him something to refresh him; and, in a short time, he was as well as ever.

Every one admired his courage and self-forgetfulness and presence of mind in saving the little child, and thought he ought to be rewarded for it. One gentleman proposed a subscription. This seemed to please them all; and they soon made up a handsome purse of money, and presented it to him.

The mother of the child could not thank him

enough. She wished she was rich, that she might give him a suitable reward; but she was not. She gave him a gold eagle, however. He told her he did not wish to take it; but she begged him to do it, as a keepsake from her. So he took it, more for her sake than for his own.

He immediately began to feel very warm about his heart, and his face shone as if a light was reflected from it. He thought he would put the gold piece by itself, that he might keep it as she desired to have him. So he unbuttoned his coat to put it in a little side-pocket; when he saw, that, although his coat was dripping with water, there was a little place in the breast, that shone as bright as a star!

There was his wonderful pocket, which he had for gotten all about; and in it he saw the old quarter which had caused him so much happiness and sorrow, as bright as ever! He slipped in his gold eagle as a companion to it, knowing it would be safe there. It made him very happy to know that he was still in

the possession of such a wonderful gift; but this did not make him so happy as it did to see the little boy he had saved, and the perfect joy of the mother at receiving him again from a watery grave.

The praises he received for his courage and his presence of mind did not make him so happy as the thought that he had done an unselfish act. He did not care so much about his pocket as he had done before, though he knew there was much more in it. He knew, too, that he could not get anything out of it unless it was for something useful, and he was afraid he might be disappointed as he had so often been before.

When he went home at night he told his mother all about his adventure. He gave her the purse, which was found to contain a hundred dollars; and he seemed to think much more of it than he did of his pocket and its contents. Now, he thought, his sister could go to school, and his mother would not have to work so hard, for a time at least.

He went back to his work the next day as usual. After some months he began to think more than ever before, that he would like to go to school. He saw that he could never know much unless he studied; and he could never become a merchant, and carry on business for himself, unless he knew how to read and write, and make calculations in figures; and consequently he could not be so useful to his mother and to others.

But how could he go to school? His mother needed his wages: indeed she could not live without them. Strange to say, he did not think of his pocket; and he came to the conclusion that he should be compelled to work a while longer before he could be spared to go to school.

He kept thinking about it as he was going hom from the store; and he was quite happy, though he did not see any way of doing just what he wanted to do. He felt so warm and comfortable, though it was quite cold, that he unbuttoned his coat, and

threw it back to cool himself. To his great surprise, his pocket appeared again! Yes, sure enough, there it was, bright as the fire, with his eagle and quarter shining through it!

"Now," he thought, "I will take out enough to support us while I go to school, and learn to read and write, and get some education, that I may be more useful to mother, and every one else." So he kept taking out eagle after eagle, until he had quite a handful.

He gave it all to his mother, and told her, with many joyful exclamations, and praises of his pocket, and thanks to the good angel who had given it to him, how he obtained so much money, and what he intended to do with it.

He was now able to go to school; and the next week he commenced. It was very hard work for him at first to study: but it came easier by degrees; and, what is strange, it seemed as though his pocket sometimes helped him very much. When he studied

to get his lessons, merely because his teacher told him to, or for the sake of excelling others, or any other selfish reason, he found it very difficult to understand or to remember them : but, when he studied because he wanted to learn something for the sake of being useful, it was easy, and every thought seemed to go into his pocket ; and, when he wanted it, it would come out of itself, or lie there so bright and distinct, that he had no difficulty in finding it.

It would take too long to tell all that he did—how often he was disappointed when he wanted money the most ; how strangely he forgot, sometimes for a great while, that he had such a pocket ; and how often it appeared to him when he least expected it. He soon learned that he could never find it, or get anything from it, merely to gratify himself. Of course, all his golden and foolish dreams about having countless sums of money merely for display vanished ; but whenever he thought of others first and himself last, his pocket always came to his

aid. So he always had as much money as he could make a good use of. If it had not become invisible when he wished to make a foolish use of his money, he would have been ruined. He never would have gone to school, or tried to make himself useful in any way: but he would have fallen into idle and vicious habits; have been miserable himself, and the cause of great unhappiness to others.

Now you may think that this story has no foundation in truth. But, if you do, you will be mistaken. In reality, we all have such pockets, in our minds, if we have not in our coats. And if we cannot put material gold and silver into them, we can put something that is much more valuable. We can put love and truth into them; and all that we put in will remain there. The more we love others, the more love there is in our hearts; and the more we give our knowledge and truth to others, the more fully we retain it. If we give a truth to others a thousand times a day, we still retain it.

But real love to others can only be put into our hearts while we are loving them, and trying to do them good. When we think of ourselves and work for ourselves, this real love never appears. But when we love to do to others as we would have them do to us, the truths in our minds shine in a clear light, and the Lord and the angels give us far more than we can give to others. In this way our minds are continually enlarging, and we are growing richer all the time. While those who love themselves more than others are really growing poorer, though they may have the greatest abundance of material gold and silver. There is nothing in their pockets that they can carry into another life.

The Lord has given to every one of us such a pocket. Every time we love others, we put into it the gold and silver which the Lord counsels us to get from Him. We put good affections and true thoughts into our minds, and they make us rich indeed. They will be "treasures laid up in heaven," which no power can destroy.

Especially will all we learn from the Bible remain in our memories, if we love it, and try to live according to it; and even in this world it will be more valuable to us, than it would be if every letter was a gold dollar. And when we go into the spiritual world, it will shine and glow and fill our whole life with warmth and light, and multiply in many beautiful forms forever.

THE ANGELS' CHRISTMAS-TREE.

One evening, not a thousand years ago, just before Christmas, some children were gayly chatting with each other and with their father and mother about Christmas, and the presents they hoped old Santa Claus would bring them. Some of them were very modest in their wishes, and others very extravagant.

"What do you expect Santa Claus will bring you?" said one of the brothers to little Charlie.

"He is going to bring me a pair of boots full of candy," he answered.

"But you cannot put them on if they are full of candy?"

"I can eat the candy up, and then I can put them on."

"Eat up two bootfuls of candy? It would make you sick; and then you would have to go to bed, and could not wear your boots."

"I don't mean," said Charlie, "to eat it all myself. I will give papa some, and mamma some, and all of you some; and then I shall eat some myself; and then I shall put on my boots, and be a captain."

"Is that all you are going to give us?" asked his little sister.

"No," he replied. "I will give you a doll, and portfolio, and a beautiful picture-book."

"And what will you give me?" asked one of the brothers.

"A thousand millions of dollars."

"And me?" cried another.

"A horse and carriage, two horses and two carriages, and some skates, and a new coat."

"And me? and me? and me?" was shouted all around.

"I will give you, mamma, a new dress, and a gold watch all covered with diamonds; and you, papa, a new, beautiful bookcase and writing-desk, and books enough to keep you reading a whole year."

"But where will you get all these things?"

"Oh! I will tell Santa Claus, and he will bring them."

And so they rattled on in their wild, fanciful way, asking for the most extravagant things, and telling how wonderfully liberal they would be if they only had the means. The children finally went to bed to dream of Santa Claus and Christmas presents, and their father to his study to write something for the Christmas festival.

He thought, supposing these children could give and receive all the presents they so vainly imagine they would if they had the means; suppose Santa Claus or some angel would bring them everything

that is good and beautiful they can ask or wish: what a wonderful thing it would be! But would it make them good and happy? Would they receive the gifts the angels saw would be the best and most beautiful?

While thinking of these things, he took the Bible, and read the account of the Saviour's birth, in the second chapter of Luke, as it is recorded in these words: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." When he had finished reading, he seemed in a moment to see the shepherds and their flocks, and the angel who brought "the good tidings of great joy;" and, while he was wondering and almost overwhelmed at the sight, the scene gradually

changed. The sheep and lambs of the flock became children, and the shepherds, who were watching over them, teachers; and they all seemed to be assembled in the church at their Christmas festival. It was so dark, that he could not see the children very distinctly; and he could only hear the voice of the angel, growing fainter and fainter as he seemed to be returning to heaven. He opened the Bible to read the account of the very scene which was passing before him; when suddenly the room was filled with a soft, beautiful, and brilliant light, and many sweet voices were heard—faintly at first, as if at a great distance. But they continued to grow more distinct, as if approaching. The children and teachers could hear them; and they all stood listening so intently, that they almost held their breath. He had never heard such sweet voices before. They seemed to be music itself; and, as they drew nearer, they suddenly burst into song. The whole air was filled with heavenly melody.

They stood entranced, and waiting with the most

eager expectation to see what would happen next. And they did not wait long; for the sounds of their voices had hardly died away, before the room seemed filled with angels. There were twice as many angels as teachers and scholars. He had never seen nor even dreamed of such beautiful beings before. No words can express the flaming light that flowed from their eyes, and glowed in their faces, and even in their garments. The colors of their garments were brighter and more delicate than were ever seen in flowers or the feathers of birds, or than ever existed in this world in anything; and the angels themselves seemed so gentle and graceful, and to look with the most inexpressible kindness and love upon all the children!

There we were, children and teachers and minister, though many of them seemed to forget all about the music, and to be unconscious of the presence of so many heavenly beings; and I was wondering what so many angels had come for. Was it to see how the

children get their lessons, or what they learn? or did they come because it was Christmas, and they wanted to attend the festival with the children?

But I soon found out why they were there: for the room began to grow larger, the walls receded on every side, and the ceiling rose to a great height; and the children with their teachers were arranged on circular seats all round the room, leaving a large open space in the middle. Soon there sprang up out of the floor, in the centre of the room, a little stem of cedar. This little stem grew very rapidly, and threw out branches on all sides, until the whole centre of the room was filled to the ceiling with a large and beautiful cedar.

"Ah!" I thought, "now I know what is going to be done. This is a Christmas-tree, and a most grand and beautiful one it is too. But where can we get any presents to hang on so large a tree?"

"We will find the presents," said one of the angels, who seemed to know my thoughts; and in an instant

they all gathered round the tree. Some of them seemed to be in it, and some on top of it; and quicker than I can tell it, the whole tree was loaded with the most beautiful presents.

Around the body of the tree was a great pile of books, so that the tree seemed to grow up out of them. Some were large, and some small. They were all bound in the most splendid manner. Some were even studded with diamonds and pearls, and were held together with clasps of gold.

The branches were so loaded with diamonds and pearls, and all kinds of precious stones, that the limbs bent down under their weight. The precious stones seemed to grow from the limbs as fruit grows from trees. Great purses full of gold were hanging from some of the limbs, and others full of silver from other limbs; and you could see the bright pieces shining through the interstices. Interspersed with these was the greatest variety of the most beautiful jewelry—bracelets and pins and chains, and neck

laces of pearls, and diamonds. Some of the pins were made of precious stones of various colors, so arranged that they were in the perfect form of flowers, with all their tints and delicate shades of color: others were in the form of miniature birds with all their colors, and every feather so perfect that they seemed to be alive; and you expected every moment to hear them sing, or to see them spread their wings and fly away. Some were of gold, with mottoes from the Word, made with letters of diamonds and other precious stones. Others, again, were in the form of fruits. There were tiny branches of cherries, and purple clusters of grapes, and golden apples and pears, with leaves of shining silver. Some of them were so small, that they made beautiful sets for pins and rings; and yet the small ones were as perfect as the large ones. I had never seen or conceived anything so perfect and beautiful.

Besides these, there were a great many toys of every kind. It would take a large book to describe

half the things I saw. There were the tiniest animals and birds, but so perfect that they seemed alive. On one limb were a beautiful pair of horses no larger than grasshoppers, and a most splendid carriage. The horses threw up their heads, and stamped their feet, as though eager to go; and the little driver, about as large as a fly, held them in with all his might. There were all kinds of cakes and candies, and every delicious thing the children like to eat. Indeed, the tree was loaded with presents, so that it looked like a pyramid of the most beautiful and brilliant things I had ever dreamed of. It made me very happy to think what beautiful presents the children were about to receive. I could hardly believe that the angels were going to give them to the children for their own. So I asked one of the angels, who seemed to have the direction of the proceedings:

"Are you going to give these beautiful things to the children?"

"Yes," he replied; "if they will receive them."

I told him I did not think there would be any difficulty about that.

"I hope not," he replied; "but I am afraid there will. It is not often that we can find children willing to receive the most beautiful and valuable things we have."

"I think you have found them now," I said.

"Well, let us see," he said. "You do not think any of the boys will refuse one of these purses of gold; do you?"

"No, indeed," I replied.

"Now, look," he said; and, taking one of the purses, he carried it to one of the classes of boys, and held it up before them, and said: "Whoever wants this may have it." I expected to see them all jump up and stretch out their hands, and to hear the cry, "Me, me, me! give it to me!" But what was my surprise to find that some of them took no notice of it! Others looked at it for a moment with

indifference, and turned away to something else. Only one boy offered to take it; and he took it with as much indifference as if it was of no value, and put it into his pocket, more because he seemed to think he must, than because he cared anything about it.

I was surprised beyond measure, and wanted to call to the boys, and beg each one of them to take a purse; but the angel told me it would do no good. "They cannot see it," he said.

"Cannot see it," I replied, "when it is so plain, and the pieces shine as if they were transparent, or there was an inward light flowing from them?"

"No," said the angel; "this is heavenly gold, and only those can see it who know something about it; and only those can keep it, and see how beautiful it is who have some love for it. If it had been earthly gold, they would have seen it and seized it quick enough."

"But what is heavenly gold good for?" I asked him. "Can you get anything for it?"

"Yes," he replied; "it is the most precious thing the Lord has made, and you can get the best things in heaven and upon the earth with it. It is one of the forms which the Lord's love assumes in coming to his children. It is one of his best gifts. The silver pieces you see in the other purses are forms of his truth."

"But, if the children should each one take a purse of gold or silver, they would soon spend it, and then they would be as poor as ever," I said.

"No, indeed," he replied. "If it was earthly gold and silver, it would be so. But there is this remarkable quality in heavenly gold: the more you spend, the more you have; and so it will continue forever. If we could get one of these little boys or girls to take a purse, and keep it, the purse would grow larger the more they spent, and the gold would continually increase in it forever."

When he told me this, I cried out to the children: "Do take a purse of gold and silver, each one of you!"

But either they did not hear me, or they did not care for it; and this made me very sad indeed.

I now looked around and observed the children more particularly. I found that either they did not see the splendid Christmas-tree, loaded with such beautiful presents, or else they did not care much about it. Some were reading their books, others were talking and laughing with each other, and did not seem to know that there were any angels in the room, or anything more than the common Christmas-tree.

"How is this?" I asked. "Cannot the children see you, and see this wonderful tree loaded with such beautiful things?"

"No," he said; "they do not see it as you see it. It is with the whole tree, and everything on it, as it was with the purses of gold and silver: only those can see the tree, and the things on it, who know something about heavenly things; and they do not appear alike beautiful to all. They appear the most beautiful to those who love them the most. Some can see

one thing, and some another; but no one can see all.

"Now," he said, "I will put on a fur coat and a mask, and change myself into Santa Claus, and offer them some cakes and candies and tin whistles, and see how eager they will all become to get them."

In an instant, there was a little cedar-tree in the room, and Santa Claus with his shaggy coat; and the children all cried out, and were eager enough to get a piece of candy or the most useless little toy. They could all see him now, and the useless things which could give them only a moment's gratification. This made me very sad; and I begged the angel to try again, and see if there were not some of the scholars who could see and retain some of the beautiful things that still remained on the tree.

So he threw off the rough fur coat and mask, and was changed back again into the beautiful angel. The children seemed to think that Santa Claus had disappeared and the presents had been distributed

Still some of the boys and girls looked toward the tree, and seemed to see something that interested them. I asked the angel if I might give anything I could find on the tree to the children, and he said I might. So I took a whole handful of diamonds and rubies and other precious stones, and offered them to the boys and girls. Some of them could not see that I had anything in my hand, and they thought I was trying to fool them. To others they appeared like coarse pebbles picked up in the street. Some thought they were very beautiful stones; but they had no idea they were so precious. But they took them, and thanked me for them, and said they would always keep them.

The angel said, if they were very careful to keep them, they would grow brighter every day, and at some time they would understand what they really are.

"Well," I thought, "I am very glad to hear that; and now I will try some other things." So I filled my hands with the beautiful pins and bracelets and necklaces, and went round among the girls, and told them

they could take their choice; but the result was just the same as with the boys. Some could not see that I had anything, and looked up in my face and laughed. Those who selected something, often took the poorest and homeliest; the most brilliant and beautiful no one would take.

I noticed also, while I was handing the presents around, the angels were always present to the children, sometimes visible, and sometimes not. They were trying to influence the children to receive the presents from the Christmas-tree. Some were trying to open their eyes to see them; others to awaken some love for them, that they might have a place to keep them in their hearts. They used all their influence and all their heavenly arts to make the children see and accept them. I noticed, also, that they had much more beautiful presents in their hands than I had in mine; and, whenever a scholar received a present from me, an angel would give a much more valuable one at the same time, though the scholar did not know it.

"How is this?" I thought.

And one of them answered, "The Lord's gifts are all double. They are like fruit, which has a shell and seed: there is an outside and an inside; and when any one accepts a gift from the Lord in your world, however beautiful it may seem, it is only the shell, the outside of it. We give the inside, which is far more beautiful and precious."

Then I thought, "I wonder if they always do this." And they seemed to know my thoughts; for one of them answered, "Yes: it is one of the most delightful things we have to do, to distribute the Lord's gifts; and this is why we are here to-day. And we should be so happy if we could help the children to take everything there is on the tree, and to receive everything from us that corresponds to them!" But neither the angels nor the teachers, some of whom took the presents, and tried to get the scholars in their class to accept them, nor I, could induce them to take many.

It was the same with the books and with everything

on the tree. "What a pity," I thought, "that they cannot all see these things as they are, and have not some place where they can put them and keep them safe!" But then I knew they were children yet, and many of them had received some precious gems, and pieces of gold and silver, which they would some time see the value of, and prize more highly than any earthly treasure; and perhaps all had received something that would be useful.

The angel seemed to understand my thoughts, and said: "Oh! yes, it takes a long time to open the eyes of children to what is really good and true; and it can only be done very gradually. To help do this is the purpose of the Sabbath-school. Perhaps, another year, some of those who can see none of the beautiful things upon the tree to-day may see many of them; and those who can only see them to-day may so value them then, that they will receive them, and have a place to keep them."

This comforted me very much; and I thought it a

great encouragement to me and to all the teachers, to prepare the children for the reception of these beautiful and precious gifts. Then I thought I would like to know something about the tree, and the splendid things on it, that I might know better how to prepare the children to obtain them. So I asked the angel what the tree was, and where it came from.

"It is a little branch from the Tree of Life," he replied, "that was in the midst of the garden of Eden. It is described in the Revelation, and is the same in another form as the Word."

"And what are all the beautiful and precious things I see on the tree?" I asked.

"They are the truths the teachers have been trying to teach the children during the past year," he answered; "and they are given by the Lord freely to every one who will take them."

"Oh! then they are not real diamonds and jewels, not real gold and silver, but only an appearance of them?" I said.

The angel looked at me sadly and reproachfully, and said: "How can you think so? you ought to know better than that. Not real! Do you think our Heavenly Father gives us vain things? They are the most real things in the world. How long will the ornaments and the earthly treasures last you prize so much? In a few years they will all be gone, and those who possessed them will be gone; but these will grow brighter and more beautiful forever. If in one year, or in ten years, a teacher can get a little boy or girl to take one thing from this tree, it will be more useful to them, and make them really richer, than it would to give them a purse of earthly gold, or the most beautiful necklace of earthly diamonds, every week."

"I see now," I replied, "that they are real things. But, if all the children would take some of them every week, they would soon be all gone, and then there would be nothing more to give them, and they would be disappointed and discontented."

"Ah!" replied the angel, "you do not seem to

know much about heavenly things yet. Now, look: we will take all the things from the tree, and see what will happen." At a signal, all the angels gathered around the tree; and in a moment it was perfectly bare, like a tree in winter stripped of all its leaves and fruit. I was just beginning to think that what I had believed was true, when the tree began to grow larger, and to be alive in every branch and twig. At first, it seemed to be covered all over with little buds: these buds began to swell, and soon the most beautiful flowers burst forth. With the blossoms, fruit began to appear; and, quicker than I can tell it, the whole tree was loaded with far richer and more beautiful things than before. The purses of gold and silver were larger, and contained more pieces; larger and more brilliant diamonds and pearls hung down in clusters from the limbs. When I first saw the tree, I thought nothing could be more splendid and beautiful; but its present appearance far surpassed the former.

"This is indeed wonderful," I said.

"And it is always so," the angel replied. "The more you take from it, the more there is on it; and the new things that take the place of the old grow more and more beautiful. And so," he continued, "it is with all our Heavenly Father's gifts: He always gives us all we will receive, and the most precious things He can persuade us to receive, and his gifts are never exhausted. The more we can receive, the more He can give us; and so it will continue to be forever. All that you have seen to-day is almost nothing compared with what I can see; and all that I can see is as nothing compared with what really exists. Do not think so poorly of our Heavenly Father."

I felt the reproof, and resolved not to doubt His goodness, or fix any limits to it, again.

And now it was time to go home. The children had received all the presents the teachers had to give them, and all they could be persuaded or had the power to take from the angels. The angel said he expected to meet us all again at the next Christmas, and he hoped

we should be able to see and receive many more beautiful and precious things than we could now. He begged me to remember, and tell the teachers and the scholars, that just so far as they learned divine truths from the Word, and obeyed them, they would be able to see and receive richer and more precious things from the Lord. The angels then gathered around me and told me how much interested they were in every one of the children and teachers, and, promising to do all they could to assist us, they vanished out of sight. The children sang their farewell song, and went home happy. So ended the Christmas festival, and so ends my story.

METEMPSYCHOSIS.

"O Father!" said little John Clive, "what is the meaning of this long, hard word?"

"What word?" asked his father.

"I cannot pronounce it. It is too long and hard for me," said John.

"Bring it to me," said his father.

So John brought the book to his father.

"That is metempsychosis."

"Me-temp-sy-cho-sis," said John, pronouncing it very slowly. "What a long, hard word! It must have a big meaning, I am sure. But I don't see what they make such long, hard words for."

"They make them to express ideas," said his father.

"Well," replied John, "metempsychosis must express a bigger idea than I ever had."

"Very probable," said his father; "but it contains a very interesting one, nevertheless; and, when I have explained it to you, I will tell you a very strange dream I had about it last night."

"A dream, a dream!" cried Susie, who had not seemed to pay much attention before. I do so like to hear about dreams!"

The children were all attention now to hear the meaning of the word, and especially the dream.

"The hard word, metempsychosis," said their father, "is made up of two words: one of which means 'soul;' and the other, 'through or beyond;' and, together, the whole word means the change, or passage, of the soul from one form to another.

"There was once a class of men, who believed that the souls of men, when they died, passed into the forms of animals, to punish them for being bad: so that, after death, one person became a cat; and

another, a dog; another, a toad or a mouse; another, a tiger or lion or bird. And, when the animal died, the soul was changed into another animal; and so on, for ages, until it was purified from its sin, when it became a human being again. And this change from one form to another they called metempsychosis."

"Oh, what a funny idea!" said John. "Ah, Susie! I guess you was a cat once, and haven't lost all your claws yet; for didn't you scratch me yesterday?"

"Yes; but I didn't mean to, as you well know. But, if I was a cat, wasn't you a big, saucy dog, that kept barking at me and worrying me?"

"And Willie was a fox!" they both cried together. "See how sly he looks now! Aha! Mr. Reynard; none of your tricks. And James is a bear: see how rude and savage he looks!"

And so the children were running on, when their father stopped them by saying: "Take care, and

not call each other names, or I shall not tell you the dream."

"Oh! the dream, the dream!" they all cried; "please, tell us the dream!" and they were sober and silent in a moment.

So their father began, and related the following

DREAM.

"I thought I was in the Sunday-school, with the room full of children before me. I had just risen to say something to them, and was waiting for them to get still and give me their attention. I felt sad to see how idle, inattentive, and even mischievous, some of them were; and happy, too, to see so many bright and pleasant faces; and I was wondering what their real characters were. I was going to try to explain to them, as well as I could, how all animals and plants are the exact forms of our own thoughts and affections; and I was wishing I could show it to

them to the life; when a sudden and strange change seemed to come over the school.

"At first, a curtain was let down, so that I could not see a single child. But soon it began to rise, and rise; and we were no longer in a room, but out in the open fields. And I saw that the children were all beginning to change into something else. There was one little boy, whom I had often noticed, who seemed to take delight in teasing and annoying those who were next to him. He would crowd them, or pinch them, or stick them with a pin, or tickle them with a straw, or do something else to trouble them. Now roots seemed to be growing out of his feet, and running into the ground. His body dwindled to a little shrub not larger than his arm, and out of it grew a great many little branches. His hair changed into leaves; and out of all the branches shot out little sharp thorns—so sharp, that no one could touch him without being pricked by them. And, what was wonderful, he seemed to know that he was a thorn-

bush, and to think his thorns the handsomest things about him; and, when any one came near him, he would swing his branches to and fro, and he was greatly delighted when he could hit any animal or person, and make him jump with pain. 'Poor boy!' I thought; 'so you was nothing but a thorn, after all.' Some others, very much like him, changed into thistles and nettles, and seemed as delighted as he did when they could prick and sting any one.

"Then I turned to another part of the field to see what had become of the little girls; for I thought I should find something beautiful and good among them. The first one I saw was a little girl who was almost always fretful and cross, and spoke very peevishly to her companions. She began to grow very small around the waist; and her dress grew tight, and was soon covered with bright spots. Her arms changed into wings; and she began to fly about in the faces of the little girls, who ran and screamed, 'A wasp, a wasp!' And, sure enough, she had be-

come a wasp; because her disposition was more like that of a wasp than anything else. She, too, seemed delighted at the fright she created; and, when she could sting any of the little girls, she fairly clapped her wings for joy. She was very proud, too, of her small waist and shiny wings; and she thought the colors of her dress the most beautiful in the world. 'Poor, silly girl!' I thought; 'you like to be nothing but a wasp, which everybody fears and hates.'

"Not far from her was a little sweet-tempered, modest, blue-eyed girl, who seemed to sink into the ground, out of sight. But soon I saw several green leaves spring up from the place where she had disappeared; and there soon followed, on slender stalks, some delicate and beautiful violets. As soon as the girls saw them, they clapped their hands, and cried, 'Oh, see those beautiful violets!—how sweet they are!' At this the violets held down their heads, but seemed to shine, as from a light within, and to send

forth a fragrance which filled the air, as though it made them happy to think that they had made others happy.

"My attention was now arrested by a great uproar among the boys; and, when I turned to learn the cause of it, I saw one of the boys down on his hands and feet, which had begun to change to hoofs. 'Oh, dear!' I thought; 'what will happen now? I hoped he would soon jump up, and have hands and feet again, as before; but, instead of that, I soon found bristles were growing out of his back, and coarse, dirty hair all over his sides. His nose grew long and round; and his ears hung, loose and flapping, down by the side of his cheeks, and he made a strange sound. Could it be possible? I listened: yes, it was a grunt! The little boy had become a pig. Then I remembered it was the same boy who ate so much cake and candy at the Christmas festival, and stuffed his pockets full, and even then was not satisfied. Yes, he had always been a pig; and

now he was only changed into a corresponding form. He soon ran off to a gutter full of filthy water, and lay down in it; and seemed to be delighted, and to think it very nice and sweet. Pretty soon, I saw several others running to the gutter, and lying down with the first; and I am very sorry to say, that some of them seemed to come from the company of little girls.

"In one of the classes was a quick, smart, active, but sly boy, who generally had his lessons, but was cunning, and ready to make fun of his companions, or play tricks upon them, or cheat them in any way he could. I was curious to know what he would become. Almost in an instant, the boy was gone, and I saw a fox frisking about; peeping here and there, and looking with wishful eyes at some chickens not far off, which he longed to pick and eat, but dared not until night. I saw some resemblance in his face to the little cunning boy's; and then I knew where the fox came from. But as soon as he saw I was

looking at him, he dodged out of sight, and I saw him no more.

"In another part of the field, I found quite a different change going on. There was one great, strong, rough boy, who delighted in his strength. He was not afraid of wind or cold or rain. 'Nothing,' I thought, 'can change him.' But I soon found that each of his toes was becoming a huge root, and running down deep into the ground. His body was growing still larger, and his clothes soon changed into a rough bark. He grew very tall, and a thousand limbs shot out from him in every direction; and, instead of a head, he had a broad and beautiful crown of leaves. His branches, like grand arms, swung and tossed about, and seemed delighted to play with the wind and wrestle with the storm; and many birds came and sang in his branches, and built their nests. He had become an oak, because that corresponded to his rude strength.

"'Now,' I thought, 'I shall lose all my children.

They will all change into something; for if this great, strong fellow could not help being changed into an oak, surely no one else can retain the human form.' And, sure enough, now they all began to change more rapidly. One boy became a beautiful horse, and ran snorting and prancing around the field. Horns came out of the head of another, and he soon became an ox. Another boy's head grew large, and his ears long; and every one could see that he was a mule. Another one's neck grew long, and his head small; his nose changed into a bill, and his arms into wings, and his clothes into feathers; his legs became short and red, and his feet thin and webbed; and it could not be denied that he was a goose.

"In one part of the field I heard a terrible snarling and yelping; and, when I looked, I saw two dogs fiercely fighting with each other; and I perceived that, a little while before, they were two boys, who were always quarrelling. Hearing a

scream in the air, I looked up; and there was an eagle just flying out of the top of the oak, and soaring away, on swift and strong wings, toward the sun. He had been one of the most intelligent boys in the school. He had a sharp eye, and seemed to look right through everything at once; but he was not always kind and good.

"There was one scholar that I had always known to be truthful and good. He was what is called in the Bible *upright*. He would not do anything in a sly and mischievous manner. He was never guilty of anything low and mean. I looked to that part of the field where I supposed I should find him, but he was not there. In his place, however, there shot up a tall, straight, and beautiful palm-tree, with its head far above all the other trees; crowned with a green tuft of leaves, within which were large clusters of flowers and fruit. 'Truly,' I thought, 'no one can mistake that tree for anything else than what it is."

"In the same class with the boy who had changed into the oak, and next to him, stood a slender, graceful, bright, and happy little fellow. His eyes were always sparkling with joy. He always had his lessons, and was pleasant and playful. He had not much strength; and, what seemed strange, he always liked to be with the big, rough, strong boy. The last time I saw him, he was standing by the trunk of the oak, apparently surprised at the change in his companion; but his eyes were still twinkling with good humor, as though he intended soon to perform some feat that would surprise every one, and fill them with delight.

"In a moment he became very slender; his legs shot into the ground; his body began to stretch out like a thread; and his head went up, and round and round the oak, until he had reached the topmost bough. And, all the way up, out of his arms and body sprang branches; and out of them, still smaller branches; and out of these, leaves and little ten-

drils, which twined around the twigs and limbs of the oak, and pulled themselves up, until the whole oak was covered. Then little stems shot out from the twigs; and soon the whole oak seemed to be loaded with large, beautiful, purple clusters of fruit. 'What fruit was it?' 'Grapes, grapes!' cried the children. Yes, the little boy had become a vine; and his strong friend bore him up from the ground into the air and sunshine, giving him his strength, and receiving in turn the beautiful ornament of his leaves and purple clusters of fruit.

"In the meantime, many of the little girls had changed into the same kind of animals and trees as the boys, and had gone off with them.

"There was one little girl, who was, indeed, quite pretty, but who evidently thought much of her dress. If she had on any garment she thought handsome, she would look at it, and feel of it, and look at others, as if she expected them to admire it, and think much more of her for having it. She

changed into a tulip; a very pretty and showy flower, but short-lived, and not very useful.

"In the same class with her was one of the sweetest and most innocent little girls I ever saw. 'Surely,' I thought, 'she will become a lily.' And so she did. Her dress changed into the long, sword-shaped leaves; her lips seemed to part, like the petals of a flower; and soon her whole head became a beautiful, fragrant, white lily, which every one loved. Another member of the same class, very much like her, changed into a lamb, and skipped and gambolled about in many innocent ways. While I was watching and admiring the lamb, I heard a number of voices crying out, 'Oh, how lovely! oh, how sweet!' When I turned to learn the cause, I saw a large rose-bush, literally covered with the most fragrant and beautiful roses. The moment I saw it, I knew who it was. There was one scholar who always took the greatest delight in learning how to do things: she did not seem to care for any-

thing else. She was very beautiful and good; but she would sometimes say sharp things to those who were rude and troublesome to her. It was this trait in her character which turned into thorns; but they did not trouble any one who did not meddle with her, and left her to do the good and beautiful things that were her delight.

"One of the companions of this girl, of a similar disposition, became an apple-tree; and, when I first saw it, the tree was all covered with beautiful white and pink blossoms, which in a short time changed into large, golden apples; and the tree was so full of them, that the branches bent almost down to the ground. And when any person or animal came up, looking as if they wanted an apple, a large, nice one would drop down upon the ground, as though the limbs threw it down to them, and were pleased to do it.

"Another proud and selfish little girl was changed into a peacock. She went strutting around, displaying her fine feathers, and thinking every one must

admire her. But in that she was greatly mistaken; for every one laughed at her, and called her a very silly bird.

"I now looked around over the whole field, and there was not a single scholar to be seen. They had all been changed into other forms. It made me very sad to think that so many beautiful children must be changed into animals and trees; and I thought I must find some way to change them back again. I tried to shout to them, to see if I could not call them back, to become children again; but they did not seem to hear me or care for me."

"And did they know that they had been changed?" asked Susie.

"Yes," replied her father; "they seemed to know it."

"It must have made them very unhappy. Oh, dear! how dreadful," cried Susie, "to become a pig, or a thistle, or a hateful wasp, or any animal or plant! I am sure it would make me wretched."

"If you do not wish to become an animal," said her father, "you must never act like one. All animals correspond to our affections and thoughts; and we can see in these animals the nature of the affections to which they correspond; and, every time we indulge in those affections, we do something to change ourselves into the form of these animals. If you would not like to be in the form of a pig or a wasp or a nettle, you must not imitate their qualities; for what difference does it make whether you are outwardly in the form or not, if you are like them in disposition? If you would not be a dog or a fox or a wolf, do not act like one. Be kind, truthful, temperate, innocent, and good, and you will be continually changing into something more and more beautiful—into the forms of the angels, who are above you, rather than to the animals, which are below you. This will be a noble metempsychosis."

NO.

"Po, Po-p-o, Popopo, Popocat, Pop-o-catapit. Oh, dear, what a hard word! I can never pronounce it, I am sure. I wish they would not have such hard names in geography," said George Gould, entirely out of patience. "Will you please to tell me how to pronounce the name of this mountain, father? I wish they would not have any mountains, or else give them easier names."

"Why, do you call that a hard word to pronounce?" said his father. "I know much harder words than that."

"Well, this is the hardest word I ever saw," murmured George. "I wish they had put the name into the volcano, and burnt it up. P-o-p-pop-o,

Popo-c-a-t-cat, Popocat. Why couldn't they have called it Pop, or Popocat? That would be a funny name, and I could remember that; for I should think of a cat popping his head out of the crater."

"I know how to pronounce it," said Jane, who had been slyly looking in the dictionary while George was grumbling and stumbling over the long word. Jane had made a grand discovery a few weeks before; and that was, that the dictionary always told her how to spell and pronounce the hardest words, and gave her the meaning besides: and now, instead of getting out of patience, or waiting for some one else to tell her, she always went to the dictionary, and was sure to find what she wanted.

"Well, if you know, please to tell me," said George; "for I shall never find it out myself, I am sure." And he began to spell it over again; but he could get no farther than "Popocat."

"You have almost got it," said Jane; "but it is not Po-po-cat, but Pŏp-o-cä'ta-pĕtl."

"Pŏp-o-cä'ta-pĕtl," said George in a slow and measured manner, stopping between each syllable. "Well, it is not so very hard after all, when you know how; but it is hard to find out, it is so long. I wish they would not have any long words, and then one could pronounce them easy enough."

"I do not think so," said his father. "Some of the hardest words I have ever seen are the shortest. I know one little word, with only two letters in it, that very few children, or men either, can always speak."

"Oh, I suppose it is some French or German word; isn't it, father?"

"No: it is English; and, what you may think strange, it is just as hard to pronounce in one language as another."

"Only two letters! What can it be? Do tell us what that little word is that is so hard!" cried both the children.

"I don't think," said George, "any short word

can be so hard as the long Mexican 'Popocatapetl;' do you, Jane?"

"No, indeed! Father must be in fun."

"No: I am not."

"Well, what is the hardest word to pronounce you ever saw, father?"

"The hardest word," replied their father, "I have ever met with in any language—and I have learned several—is a little word of two letters—N-o, No."

"Oh, now we know you are making fun of us!" cried both the children; "that is one of the easiest words in the world." And, to prove their father was mistaken, they both repeated, "No, no, no," a great many times.

"I am not joking in the least. I really think it is the hardest word to speak I ever found. It may seem easy enough to you to-night; but perhaps you cannot pronounce it to-morrow."

"I can always say it, I know I can," said George with much confidence; "'No.' Why, it is as easy

to say it as to breathe. Just open your mouth, and that little word will pop out any time; but when you come to that 'Pop,' with a long eruption of cats and pet eels" (George was somewhat of a wag, let me tell you), that is enough to choke one."

"Well," replied his father, "I hope you will always find it as easy to pronounce as you think it is now, and be able to speak it when you ought to."

Here the conversation ended. George finished learning his lesson, and, at the appointed time, went to bed, to dream of volcanoes, cats, and eels, and hard words which it was impossible to pronounce.

In the morning he went bravely to school, with the full consciousness that he knew his lesson, and a little proud that he could pronounce so hard a word as "Popocatapetl."

Not far from the school-house was a large pond of very deep water, where the boys were accustomed to skate and slide when it was frozen over. So eager

were they to enjoy the sport, that they could hardly wait for the ice to get strong enough to bear them, before they went on to it; and, the winter before, two of these venturesome boys had been drowned. Mr. Gould had therefore strictly forbidden George to go on the ice, without his special permission.

The night before, while George was getting his lesson by a glowing fire, Jack Frost had been busy changing the surface of the pond into beautiful crystals of ice; and when the boys went to school in the morning, they found the pond as smooth and clear as glass. Some of them threw a few stones on to the ice to test its strength; but the most daring of the boys did not think it safe in the morning. The day was cold, however; and they thought by noon it would be strong enough to bear. The prospect for sport was so great, that they could hardly wait until noon; and the morning seemed much longer than usual.

As soon as the school was out, the boys all ran to

the pond—some to try the ice, and others merely to see it.

"Come, Georgie," said William Green; "now we will have a glorious time sliding. I am sure the ice is strong enough to bear; and see how smooth it is!"

George hesitated, and said he did not believe it was strong enough; for it had been frozen over only one night.

"Oh, come on!" said another boy; "I know it is strong enough. I have known it to freeze over in one night many a time, so itwould bear: haven't you, John?"

"Yes," answered John Brown; "it did one night last winter; and it wasn't as cold as it was last night, either."

But George still hesitated. He remembered what his father had said, and he was a little afraid also that the ice was not strong enough to be quite safe.

"I know why George won't go," said John; "he's afraid he might fall down and hurt himself." "Or the ice might crack," said another; "and the noise would frighten him. Perhaps his mother might not like it." "Come on, boys, and let him go!" shouted a number of the boys. "He's a coward; that's the reason he won't come."

George could stand this no longer; for he was rather proud of his courage. "I am not afraid," said he; and, without stopping to think more, he ran to the pond, and was the first one on the ice. They kept near the shore at first; but, although the ice bent and cracked when several of the boys happened to come near to each other, they grew more and more venturesome. They enjoyed the sport very much; running and sliding, and trying to catch each other on its smooth surface. More and more boys kept coming on as they saw the sport, and began to think there was no danger; when, amidst their laughter and merry calls, there was a

loud cry, "The ice has broken, the ice has broken!" and, sure enough, three of the boys had broken through, and were struggling in the water; and one of them was George. It so happened that the teacher had been attracted by the noise, and had come to call the boys from the ice just as they broke through. He caught some boards from a fence close by; and calling to the boys in the water not to be afraid, but to keep their heads above the water, he shoved the boards out on the ice; and, by the aid of some of the scholars, he pushed them along until they got one within reach of the boys in the water. The teacher then told them to hold on to that until he could get some more. After a while, they succeeded in reaching the three boys and getting them out of the water, but not until they were nearly frozen.

They were immediately sent home. George's father and mother were very much frightened when he was brought in, and they learned how narrowly he had escaped drowning. They were so rejoiced to find

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that he was safe, however, that they did not ask him how he came to go on the ice, until after tea. When they were all gathered together about the cheerful fire, his father asked him how he came to disobey his positive command.

George said he did not want to go, but the boys made him.

"How did they make you? Did they take hold of you, and drag you on?" asked his father.

"No," said George; "but they all wanted me to go."

"When they asked you, why didn't you say 'No'?"

"I was going to; but they called me a coward, and said I was afraid to go; and I couldn't stand that."

"And so," said his father, "you found it easier to disobey me, and run the risk of losing your own life, than to say that little word you thought so easy last night. You could not say 'No.'"

George now began to see why the word was so hard to pronounce. It was not because it was so long, or

composed of such difficult sounds, but because it was opposing evil and false principles to say it. And this is the hardest thing we have to do. He learned a most important lesson, however, from his disaster. Whenever in after-life he was tempted by his companions or his own evils to do wrong, he remembered his narrow escape from drowning, and the importance of the little word "No;" and though it cost him a great effort sometimes to say it, yet he bravely made it. The oftener he said it, the easier it became; and, in time, he could say it, when occasion required, without much effort.

I hope all the children who read this story will remember this little word, and learn to speak it when they ought. They will sometimes find it very difficult to pronounce; but the more difficult, the more important it is; and no one will ever find it impossible to speak, if he earnestly tries, and looks to the Lord to help him. Whenever you are tempted to do wrong, never forget to say "No."

THE VINE AND WILLOW.

A GRAPE-VINE of a very choice kind, had, by some chance, been planted among some willows by the side of a brook. The brook gave it plenty of water to drink; the soil was rich and well adapted to the nature of the vine, and it grew rapidly, though much overshadowed and obstructed by the willows.

One spring morning it chanced to look down into the still water of the brook, where it saw itself, as in a mirror. "What a homely creature I am," thought the vine. "How crooked and knotty my body is, and my skin is so coarse and rough. The willow is smooth and fair. How graceful her branches are! how long and how slender her leaves! And then I am so weak. I can't stand alone; I have to cling to stakes and

bushes. I couldn't get up from the ground at all, if it was not for these willows. How wretched it is to be so dependent! I don't see why I could not have been made as graceful and beautiful in form as the willow, and as strong as other plants. I am a poor, weak, and ugly thing, and I don't see any use in my living." And the vine clung closer to the earth and wished to be buried in it.

A few days after this lamentation of the vine, the gardener and his son came along and stopped near the spot where the vine and willow were growing.

"O father!" exclaimed David, "here is a beautiful grape-vine; but it has no chance to grow, there are so many of these useless willows about it! Can't I take it up and plant it where it can have a chance for life?"

"I am afraid it would kill it to take it up," said his father; "but you may get the axe, and cut down the willows, and clear away the weeds, and dig up the ground all around it, so that the sun can get at the

roots, and there will be nothing to hinder it from growing."

"Must we not have some stakes also to train it up on?" said David.

"Yes. I think you can make some out of the willows: you can trim off the branches; but do not cut them too close, or the tendrils will have nothing to cling to; sharpen one end, and drive the stake firmly into the ground. Perhaps you will have to tie the vine to the stake, to hold it there, until it has had time to grow and twine itself around it. Take good care of it, and in time you will have delicious grapes."

"Do you think it will bear this year, father?"

"I am afraid not, it has been so much injured by the willows and weeds; but it will bear next year, if you take good care of it."

"I don't see why vines don't grow like peach-trees and apple-trees; then they could hold themselves up," said David.

"Everything has its own form," said his father,

"They put their strength to a better use. They give up their whole life to making fruit."

The vine heard this conversation with the utmost astonishment. "Does the gardener and his son love me so much better than the beautiful willow, that I have so greatly admired and envied?" Grapes! I wonder what those wonderful qualities are which make them think so much of me. I cannot imagine, though I always felt that there was something in me that would be useful, if I only had a chance. If they do hold me up from the ground where I can breathe freely, and get warm in the sun, I'll do the best I can. I am almost suffocated here."

In a little while David returned with the axe, and went to work, cutting down the willows, and clearing away the weeds. The vine felt almost sorry to see the willows fall to the ground, and be robbed of their beautiful leaves. When he had cleared them all away, David took a sharp spade and dug up the ground and made it mellow, that the air and the

warmth of the sun might get access to the roots of the vine. Then he made some stakes from the willows, and stuck them firmly into the earth, and tied the vine to them, as his father had told him.

The vine was much delighted with its new situation. The warmth of the sun penetrated its roots and diffused itself through its whole body. "How pleasant it is up here!" it said. "How easily I can breathe! I must be of great importance, or the gardener would not have taken so much care of me. How long my branches are! I had no idea I was so big. But I couldn't half see myself down there on the ground, covered up with leaves, and overshadowed by the willows.

Now the vine began to be a little vain of the attentions paid to it, and proud of its long branches and improved condition. But it was soon destined to be an example of the old saying, "Pride goes before a fall."

When David had finished his work, he went to his

father, and asked him to come and see if he had done it right.

"Very well, indeed," said his father. "But it will never do to leave so many long branches on the vine. It will never bear any fruit if they are all left as they are now;" and he took out his knife and began to cut off one after another, and continued to do so until he left nothing but the trunk of the vine, and a few small stumps of branches.

"O dear!" thought the vine, "he means to kill me, after all. I worked hard all last summer to make those branches, and now he has cut them off close to my body. He has left nothing but little stumps. The little beauty I had is spoiled. It is too cruel. The gardener must be a very wicked man. He might just as well have cut me down at once, as he did the willow. Indeed, it would have been much better, than to have tied me up at the stake and tortured me in this way."

So the vine shed many tears, and mourned over

the loss of its possessions, almost as foolishly as men do, when the Lord of the Vineyard prunes them of some of their useless branches, that they may not waste their powers in making leaves only.

It was now nearly dark. The gardener went into the house. The clouds began to gather in the sky, and the rain to pour down in torrents.

"How lonely and dismal it is here!" said the vine. "I feel so cold and sore! I do believe I shall bleed to death. I don't feel half as well as I did when I was down upon the ground, with the friendly leaves and willows all around me. What a blast of wind! I am sure I shall be blown to pieces! I don't care much if I am. I might as well die first as last." So saying, the vine resigned itself to its fate and awaited death.

The wind and the rain finally ceased, and, instead of killing the vine, the rain washed all the dirt from its trunk and the dust from its leaves, and so soaked the ground around its roots, that every little thirsty

rootlet had as much water as it wanted to drink, and became quite refreshed by it."

In the morning the clouds had all passed away, and the sun rose warm and bright. The vine began to feel very comfortable. A new life was working in its roots, and flowing all through its body. Its wounds began to heal over, and, though a little sore, it felt quite cheerful and happy. A strong impulse seemed to be created within it, to enter upon some higher work than ever before. The root sent up more blood than ever, and much of it seemed to be of a richer quality than usual.

The thought was immediately suggested to the vine, that it could put the purer parts of the juice to a better use than to make leaves. "I will make leaves of the coarsest, and I will try to make something more precious with the best materials."

The vine was so much pleased with this idea, that it began to work with all its might to carry its purpose into effect. It formed little stems, and wove the

most delicate little blossoms out of very fine threads, and through these threads it conveyed still finer substances, and deposited them in little green bags, which it made for the purpose of holding them, and arranged them in rows and clusters. It put forth new branches from the stumps that had been left by the gardener, and strung them with stems of grapes.

Now the vine found that it could do this higher work, since the branches were cut off, as easily as it could make leaves before. Its powers became more concentrated. It began to see the wisdom of the gardener in pruning it, and to believe that it was not done in anger, but in love, for the purpose of doing it good. Human vines make the same complaint when they are pruned, and find the same advantages in the pruning.

A few weeks after the vine had been trained up and pruned, the gardener and his son were walking round the garden looking at the plants. David

thought he would see how his vine was getting along. He was much surprised to find how much it had grown.

"O father! do come here," he said, "and see how nicely my vine is growing. It is going to bear grapes this year. They have begun to form already. See how many branches! What fine clusters there will be!"

"That is because we pruned it, and let the light and heat get a chance to act upon it. If we had not done that, it would not have borne a single grape."

"I always hate to cut off the leaves and branches. It seems too hard. But I know that pruning is a good thing," said David.

"Yes," said his father, "and it is just as useful to boys and girls, and to men and women, as it is to grape-vines."

"I don't see how you can prune boys and girls and men," said David. "You can't cut off their arms and legs."

"No. But when they think so much about their own selfish pleasure, that they want to spend their whole time in idleness or play, and are unwilling to study, or do any useful work, they have to be pruned. And when older people think of nothing but making money, and their own ease and comfort, and neglect to do any good to others, from love to them, they have to be pruned, or they would never go to heaven."

"Pruned!" said David, with surprise and doubt in his looks and voice; "how can they be pruned?"

"How do you prune a vine?" asked his father.

"I cut off some of its branches."

"Why do you do that?"

"You told me it was to prevent the sap from flowing into so many branches, and all growing to leaves."

"That is it; and if it could be done in any other way than by cutting off the branches, the effect would be the same. Boys and girls are pruned by

restraining them from following their own inclinations, and by compelling them to study and work and make themselves useful. I pruned you, the other day, when I refused to let you go a-fishing, and made you set out plants in the garden."

"Being pruned is not very pleasant, then," said David. "I thought it was too bad, that I could not have some fun with the other boys."

"I knew that," said his father. "And I suppose the vine thought it was too bad, to have all its branches cut off, and nothing but little stubs left; if it could think."

"That is the truth," said the vine to itself, which had overheard the whole conversation. "I can think after the fashion of vines, and I did think you was a cruel and wicked man, to rob me of that which could do you no good, and which left me so bare. But now I see that I was mistaken."

The gardener did not hear the vine, and he went

on with his remarks, saying: "I disliked to prune you as much as you did the vine."

"Were you ever pruned, father?" The application was getting a little too personal, and David thought he would like to ward it off a little.

"Oh! yes," his father replied, with so much feeling that his son was greatly surprised. "I have been pruned and clipped in and disciplined in every way. If I had not I should have borne nothing but leaves; and I should have been like the tree mentioned in the Gospel: "Every tree, that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire."

"Well," thought the vine, "then I am not alone in this matter; and I feel much better reconciled to my pruning. I suppose I shall never have to be pruned again. But if I do, I shall understand the reason for it, and can bear it much better than I did before."

The gardener and David went on to examine the

other plants, and the vine went on growing and perfecting its grapes. Every cluster was made as large and perfect as possible. Each grape was formed round and plump, and filled with the richest juice the vine could distil from the earth, air, and sunbeams.

Toward the last of the summer, the gardener and David came again to examine the vine. They were filled with admiration at the great number of large clusters.

"That is a most excellent vine," said the gardener. "See what large clusters! But I am afraid they will never ripen, they are so much shaded by the leaves. We must pull off a great many of them, and let the sun shine full upon the grapes, or they will be good for nothing. It is time it was done, too, and you may do it now. You can see where the grapes are shaded too much."

The vine overheard the conversation, and was filled with terror by it. It had been delighted with

the first part of the gardener's remarks, and perhaps its pride was excited a little also, by hearing itself praised so much. But what a terrible blow was given to its self-love, when it found that it must lose so many of its beautiful children, the leaves! The grapes were all made. What more could the vine do? The gardener might have every one of them, if he wanted them. What harm could the leaves do, now the grapes were made?

But the complaints were not heard. David had already begun to strip off the leaves. "What large ones they are! How they have grown!" he said. "Isn't it a pity to strip them off so?"

"I think so," groaned the vine, as leaf after leaf was torn from its body. "I will never try to make any more leaves. I will do nothing but make grapes another year."

Rip, rip, went the leaves, until the ground was covered with them. "There," said David, "I think that will do. It is rather hard, isn't, it, my beauty?

But it will do you good. The sun will warm you up, and put a beautiful purple into your grapes, and make them sweet and luscious."

This comforted the vine a little. Pulling off the leaves did not hurt so much as it feared, and it began to feel a warm, new, and more intense life pervading its whole body. "More pruning was needed," she thought; "and I begin to feel the good effects of it already. It is not pleasant though, to be stripped in this way. I wonder what leaves are good for."

The sun poured in his beams with more power, and warmed up the vine, and cheered its drooping spirits wonderfully. The grapes began to soften and turn purple and grow sweeter every day. The vine found that it was repaid many times for its leaves, by a far greater good. It was learning the lesson which we all must learn, that pruning is good for us, and that the Lord never removes any lesser or apparent good, without giving us a real, and much higher good in return.

When the grapes were fully ripe, David and his brothers and sisters came with a basket to gather them. When they saw the large and beautiful clusters, the children shouted and danced for joy. David gave a large bunch to each one of them to eat, and said he would take the rest home to their mother.

They ate them, and smacked their lips and danced around with delight. "See what a big one!" shouted Willie, holding up a large purple ball. "Down it goes!" and it disappeared in an instant.

"See what a sweet one!" said Susie. "Down it goes!" and that disappeared also.

It made the vine happy, to see how happy the fruits of its labor made the children, and it was re paid for the whole summer's work.

"Is this the vine you found on the ground, and that you have talked so much about?" asked Willie.

"Yes," said David.

"What a beauty!" exclaimed Willie.

"A beauty!" said the vine to itself; "I thought I

was the homeliest creature that ever lived, especially since I have been pruned and stripped of my leaves. Well, if they think me beautiful and love me, that is sufficient. It is certainly better than lying idle on the ground all summer."

The vine had done a good summer's work, and had added something to the happiness of one family of human beings. All the events, which seemed to be its greatest misfortunes, had proved to be blessings. It began to trust less in itself, and to believe that the true way to be safe and happy is to do its own work, and submit itself to the direction of the gardener. But it had gained power, as well as wisdom and the pleasure of being useful. It had grown strong and capable of doing more good another year.

Little boys and girls will find, that what is true for the vine, is true for them. They are not strong enough to stand alone. They are not wise enough to direct themselves. Those children who seem to be more beautiful and happy than they are, may be

far less so. All children need a great amount of pruning. But, if they are true and obedient to their parents, and faithful in their work, they will make others happy, and every year they will become happier themselves, and their power to do good to others will continually increase.

CHESTNUTTING.

"I CAN go. Hurrah!"

"Can you? Good. Won't we have a glorious time?"

"Yes, indeed, we will! and chestnuts enough to roast, and boil, and fill our pockets all winter."

"What time shall we set out?"

"As early as you please; I wouldn't care if we were going to-night. Let us leave as soon as it is light in the morning."

"Oh! no, that is too early. I want my breakfast before I go. We shall be as hungry as bears, then, before we get home."

"I am going to take some lunch. I mean to fill my basket full."

"That is a first-rate idea; I never thought of that. So will I."

"Can you get your breakfast by six o'clock?"

"Oh! yes. Easy enough."

"Well, then let it be six. Be sure to be ready, for I want to be on the top of Jones' hill before any one else. I will call for you."

"Never fear. I am as anxious to be there as you are. What a beautiful day it is going to be! We'll have a splendid time, and fill our baskets long before night, or I am greatly mistaken."

"Yes, father says to morrow will be just the time to pick chestnuts. There have been several hard frosts, and they have opened the burrs, so that the chestnuts will rattle down at the least touch."

"And didn't the wind blow this morning! I tell you, the trees got a good shaking, and the little brown fellows will lie upon the ground as thick as three in a bed and two in the middle."

"I know where there are lots of trees, and if we

only get there first, we'll have a plenty of fun, and chestnuts too."

"Well, good-night! and six o'clock is the hour when the fun begins."

"I'll be ready. Good-night."

This spirited dialogue had been carried on by James Hall and George Wells, two boys who lived near to each other. Their fathers were farmers, and the boys had to work hard. The prospect of a holiday, therefore, filled their hearts to overflowing with delight. Their fathers had promised them, that they should have a whole day for picking chestnuts, when they were ripe, if they were good boys and faithful in their work.

The boys had fulfilled their part of the conditions, and their fathers were ready to give the promised holiday. There had been several hard frosts, followed by a high wind; and now, if ever, the boys would find plenty of chestnuts on the ground.

So Mr. Wells told George, that he thought the

next day would be as good a time as they would be likely to have for picking chestnuts, and he might run over and ask James if he could go with him.

George found James in the barn-yard, doing his evening chores, aud soon made known his errand. James knew that the potatoes were not all dug, and he was afraid he could not go. But he could soon find out, for he never thought of disobeying his father. So he ran into the house and told him that George had come to see if he could go chestnutting with him to-morrow. His father considered the matter a moment, and then told him, to his great joy, that he might go. He thanked his father, and, as might be expected from an impulsive boy, he rushed out and announced his success in the manner just described.

The boys went to bed early, with their heads full of chestnuts, and their hearts full of joy at the thought of having a free ramble over the hills. They slept soundly and rose early, and went eagerly about the

preparations for the day's sport. Their mothers fitted them out with a nice lunch, and gave them many cautions against getting hurt, and told them to be sure to return before dark.

Each one of the boys took a basket that would hold about six quarts, and a bag that would hold much more; for they wanted to be prepared to take advantage of the greatest success. Their baskets were pretty well filled with lunch, but they had no fears, that they would find any difficulty in emptying them, and making room for their nuts.

They tied the bags across their shoulders, and took their baskets on their arms, and set out with great glee. It was a bright morning. The sun was just rising over the hill, and the grass was white and stiff with frost. The keen air gave elasticity to their spirits, and quickened their steps. They followed the main road for a short distance, and then turned into a lane, and walked briskly along for Mr. Jones' hill.

This was a rough pasture, full of rocks and bushes,

with many chestnut trees scattered over it. It was a famous place for chestnutting, and was well known to all the boys in the neighborhood. The opening of the burrs was watched by many wishful eyes, and there was often a strife to see who could reap the harvest first.

"I wish we had set out before it was light," said George, "breakfast, or no breakfast. I'll bet you those Greenes will be on the hill before us, and pick half the chestnuts before we get there."

"No they won't," said James, "unless they pick mighty fast. There are too many to be gathered in an hour, even if the whole tribe went at it; we'll get our share, you see if we don't."

"I hope so; but I wish we had been there an hour ago, to make it sure."

"Halloo," cried James, "there is a woodchuck!"

"Where?"

"Just ahead of us. Don't you see him? There he goes into that heap of stones; we can catch him just as easy as not."

The chestnuts were instantly forgotten; the prospect of catching a woodchuck put all thoughts of chestnuts out of their heads, and they both ran as fast as possible for the heap of stones, where he had disappeared.

"There he is," cried James, "I can just see his tail. Ho, ho, master woodchuck! we'll bag you in a minute. Get a stick, George, and stand ready to give him a rap over the head, as soon as I pull away the stones."

The stick was soon found, and George stood ready to give him a stunning blow, as soon as James had removed the stones enough to give him a chance. George threw down the stones as fast as he could. He had almost reached him. A moment more, and James could give the fatal blow. "Be ready," he cried, "and when I raise that flat stone, give it to him."

James stood with his club raised, his teeth set, and every muscle strained to its utmost tension, to strike, the moment he could get a chance at him.

The stone was large, and it required all George's strength to raise it. But he was excited; he made a great effort, and up it came; and down went the club with tremendous force; but it did not hit the woodchuck. He was too quick for James. He dodged the blow and bounded off for another stone heap. The boys both gave chase, yelling loud enough to frighten the poor animal to death, if noise could do it. George almost jumped on him with his feet, and James gave him a furious blow on his tail just as he disappeared in another heap of stones.

"We'll have him yet," cried George; and the stones began to fly to the right and left. But they soon found, that the woodchuck had a hole in the middle of the heap of stones, and that they had spent their time and labor in vain.

"We've holed the woodchuck," said James, "if we haven't bagged him!"

"Yes, confound him!" said George; "isn't it too bad? We've lost an hour, and the woodchuck too!"

"Why didn't the fool keep still, and let me feel his bumps, with my stick?"

"Because he wasn't a fool," replied George.

"Well, there is no help for it now," replied James, "but I wish he wouldn't take his morning walks quite so early. If I had my trap here, I would lay it down for him to put his foot in when he comes out again."

The boys picked up their baskets and hurried on as fast as they could. They had to rise one hill and then go down into a hollow, before they came to the one on which they expected to find the chestnuts. From the top of the first hill, they could see nearly all over the second one. As soon as they reached the top, they looked with anxious eyes to see if any one had got the start of them.

"See there!" cried George, who was a little in advance of James; "there are those Greenes, and a dozen other boys, picking as fast as they can. Come on, or there will not be a chestnut left for us."

The boys ran down the hill and up the other as fast as they could, inwardly cursing the innocent woodchuck for not keeping out of sight, or lying still and permitting them to beat his brains out.

They soon came to a chestnut tree, and ran all round it with their heads bent down, looking sharply for chestnuts. But there was hardly one to be seen. Somebody had been there before them and picked them all. They ran to another tree with no better success.

"Let us go over to the other side of the hill, next to the woods," said James. "There are some good trees there, and I don't believe any one has visited them."

Running partly round the hill, so as not to be seen by the other boys, they soon came to a large tree, and, to their great joy, they found the ground almost covered with chestnuts. They took their lunch out of their baskets as quick as they could, and put it into their bags, and went to work in good earnest.

"We'll have a good lot of chestnuts yet," said James, "in spite of the woodchucks and the Greenes."

"I wonder if there are many on the tree. I never thought to look up. If there are, we had better climb up and shake them down, for the thicker they are, the faster we can pick."

The boys both ran out on opposite sides of the tree, a little distance beyond the branches, to see whether the chestnuts had all fallen off or not.

"Oh! there are lots of them on this side," said James.

"And so there are on this," shouted George. "They are not half out of the burrs. Let us climb up and shake them down, and we can fill our baskets and bags, too, from this tree alone, if no other boys come along."

It was a difficult tree to climb, but they were soon in the top, shaking with all their might. The chestnuts came rattling down, and the boys were in high

glee. James caught hold of a large limb and cried out, as he would to a boy who had filled his pockets full of stolen fruit, "What are you about? What business have you with all these chestnuts? You had better shell out, or I will give you a good shaking. There! I told you so!" and he shook the limb till every burr was emptied.

"I'll shake you," said George to another, "as old Trip would have shaken that woodchuck, if he had got hold of him."

"Oh! George," cried James, "there's a whole lot of fellows coming this way. Isn't it too bad! Let us get down and go to picking as fast as we can."

They slid down, and began to pick as fast as they could make their fingers fly. But they had not more than half filled their baskets before a whole crowd of boys came in sight.

"What are your doing here?" cried Tom Greene, a great rough fellow, with a whole troop of boys at his heels.

"None of your business," said George; "you had better clear out. It isn't fair to come and pick the nuts we have shaken down."

"Isn't fair, ha! I had better clear out, had I? I will clear you out and the chestnuts, too. Come on, boys, and help these fellows pick up their chestnuts."

The boys rushed in, and they all went to picking as fast as they could; and it was not long before they were all gathered.

George and James knew they could do nothing against so many boys, and they took their bags and baskets and quietly went away in search of another tree.

"Wasn't it too bad," said George, "that those fellows came along just as we were having such a nice time? If they had stayed away an hour longer, we should have filled our baskets, and more, too."

"It does seem too bad. But I suppose they have just as good a right to the chestnuts as we have.

So we can't complain. Perhaps we'll find better picking yet."

They went all over the hill; but the crowd of boys had been before them, and they could glean only a few that the others had left.

After wandering around awhile, with no success, George said, "Come, I know it is noon. Let us have some lunch."

"It can't be noon, I am sure," said James. "It does not seem as though we had been here an hour yet."

"Look at the sun! It is noon by that, and it exactly agrees with my chronometer."

"Your chronometer! I should like to see it. It is a turnip, I guess," said James.

"No, it is not. I can't show it very well, for the works are all inside, and the hands are nothing but a set of teeth. But it is as true as the sun. I never knew it fail to tell me when it was time for lunch."

"Oh! if your stomach is your chronometer, I

think it must be right, for it agrees with mine exactly. But where shall we eat our lunch? If those fellows should see us, they would want to help us eat our lunch as well as pick up the chestnuts; and though there is a plenty for you and me, there would hardly be a mouthful apiece for them; especially if their mouths are all as big as Tom Greene's."

"I know what we'll do! Away over in the woods by that clump of hemlocks, there is a spring of cool water, and some rocks covered with moss. It will be a beautiful place to lunch, and there will be no danger of being disturbed. When we have had our lunch, we will go into the chestnut woods on the other side of the hill. I believe we shall find a plenty of chestnuts there, and I am sure Tom Greene has not sense enough to think of such a place."

This plan pleased them both. They soon found the place in the woods, and a beautiful one it was. A cool spring of water, clear as crystal, gushed out of the side of the hill and run down over

the rocks. The hemlocks spread their thick branches all around. The moss and the leaves covered the ground, and filled the air with a most delightful fragrance. The boys spread their cold chicken and well-buttered bread upon a clean rock that rose about a foot above the ground. Then they stretched themselves upon the soft couch of leaves and moss, and ate their lunch in a most luxurious manner, reclining after the fashion of the Eastern nations.

The chicken and bread and butter and pie rapidly disappeared, and a big red apple followed for dessert. When they had finished eating, they washed their food down with a good drink from the spring.

"There," said George, "I feel better; I have something to lean upon now when I stoop down; bring on your chestnuts, and I will pick them."

"The lunch was a lucky idea of yours," said James; "but I expect you were indebted to your chronometer for it."

"Yes, I knew it would point to lunch about this

time, and begin to pinch, if it didn't strike, until the lunch was eaten."

"It must be a remarkable time-piece, to tell you the night before, when it will be noon the next day."

"Don't laugh at my time-piece. Hush! there's a gray-squirrel!"

"Where?"

"Just over behind that rotten log. Keep still, and see what he'll do."

"There he comes! Isn't he a beauty? He's coming to see whom he has for visitors. Or, perhaps he expects an invitation to dine."

"Come on, Master Gray! you're welcome to all we have left. Here is a piece of apple, and a nice crust you may like; and all the bones are at your service."

Master Shadowtail was rather bashful, and did not seem inclined to accept the invitation. Perhaps he did not like the appearance of the new-comers. He looked at them with his bright eyes, turning his head first one way and then the other, until he appeared to

have made up his mind; then he dodged behind a big oak tree, and ran up into the top as fast as he could.

"If I had my gun here now," said George, "I would compel him to accept our invitation, or I would make a dinner of him to-morrow."

"Oh! shocking!" said James, with affected horror. "Invite a guest to dine with you, and if he don't accept your invitation, shoot him and eat him! That is worse than the cannibals."

"Well, there is no danger of my doing it to-day. The squirrel is gone, and I don't care about having a wild-goose chase after a squirrel. The one after the woodchuck has cost us enough."

"A wild-goose chase after a woodchuck! Rather a queer kind of goose, I should think."

"Well, he made geese of us, any way. But we had some fun, and we'll get plenty of chestnuts yet."

"Not if we stay here and talk all the afternoon. Come, boys! all hands to work," cried James, jumping up and seizing his basket and bag.

"How far is it to the woods where we are to fill our baskets and bags in an hour?"

"I don't know how far it is to the woods where we can do that. But it is not more than half a mile to the place, I mean; if we go straight across."

The boys set out, and hurried on as fast as they could, picking their way among the thick bushes, and jumping over logs and rocks. They soon reached the woods and began their search for chestnuts. They found a good many. But still they were not so plenty as they hoped they would be, and they were so covered up with the leaves that they could not pick them very fast. They worked on with boyish eagerness for a short time, shouting with joy, or growling with disappointment, according to their success.

But after a while they began to get tired. "We shall never fill our baskets here," said George. "Is there no other place where we can go? What do you say to the big tree over in Johnson's hollow?"

"I don't know. I am afraid it is too far; and if we shouldn't find any there, we couldn't get any more, for the sun would be down before we could get home."

"I don't believe it is too far. It isn't more than two o'clock now, and we can go there in half an hour, easily; and if the chestnuts are as plenty as I have seen them, we'll fill our bags, and get home before dark yet."

"Well, come on. I hate to go home without a good lot of chestnuts. Father will laugh at me, and say my basket is not as full of chestnuts as it was of lunch in the morning."

So the boys hurried on again across another field, and over another hill, still farther from home.

"I do hope," said George, "that no one has got ahead of us this time."

"So do I. If they have, we shall go home with empty bags; that's all."

"We shall soon know, for we are almost there.

There is the tree now. I can just see the top of it behind that big rock.'

"Oh! yes. I see it. What a tremendous big tree it is! But I don't see any chestnuts on it."

"We're not near enough to it for that, yet. I don't see anybody on it or under it, and that's a good sign."

The boys now began to run, in their eagerness to have the question of success or failure decided. As they came near the tree, George, who was a little ahead, cried, "The tree is just as full as it can be; and what big fellows! Hurrah! now we'll fill our bags? This is not a wild-goose nor a woodchuck chase."

As soon as they came up to the tree, they stood a moment in admiration of the sight before them. The tree, which was large and tall, was literally covered with nuts. The burrs were open and exposed the nuts, as if offering them to the boys. They ran under the tree, but there were not many on the

ground. The limbs were so large and stiff, and the tree was so much sheltered by its position, that the wind had not shaken them down.

"'Whoever wants chestnuts must come after them,' is what the tree says to us," said James. "'There are plenty up here, at your service, boys; but you must come and get them.'"

"And the tree is a hard one to climb. That's the reason the nuts have not been picked," said George. "You can see that somebody has been here to-day, and they did not get the nuts—because they couldn't."

"I am afraid that will be the case with us," said James. "I know I can't climb that tree; and if I could, the limbs are so large and stiff that I couldn't shake them. Doesn't the old fellow say, 'Shake me if you can'?"

"Well, if we can't shake him, we can thrash him."

"What do you mean by that?"

"We can cut a long, slender pole, and climb out on the limbs as far as we can, and then whip the nuts down."

"So we can. But we must get up the tree first, and I don't believe either of us can do it."

"Perhaps you can't, but I know I can. It must be a bigger and a smoother tree than that, to keep me from climbing it, especially when there are so many chestnuts on the top of it. Run and cut a stick, and I will pull off my shoes and see if I can climb the old fellow."

James ran to the bushes, which were close by, and soon returned with a long slender rod.

"That's just the thing," said George. "Now give me a lift, and we will see how much of a squirrel I am."

James stood at the foot of the tree, and lifted George up until he could stand on his shoulders, and then he put his hand under his foot, and helped him up as far as he could reach. "There, you must go it alone now" he said.

"Well, alone it is, then," and he hitched bravely up for a few feet, and then stopped.

"Can't you go any farther?" said James.

"Yes. I am only resting. Here we go again," and he went on, until he reached a point where the tree forked into two main branches. When he had succeeded in getting one arm through the crotch of the tree, he rested again; and he could do it now without much effort.

"You'll come it now," cried James, "easy enough. But you must hurry up, or it will be dark before you get the chestnuts down."

George climbed up a little farther, until he could reach a limb. The feat was accomplished.

James tossed the rod up to him, and the great brown chestnuts, and burrs too, soon came rattling down in showers, especially when George found a limb he could shake.

"This is glorious," cried James, all the time picking them up as fast as he could make his fingers fly.

"It hails down here, and some of the hail-stones are big and sharp. Take care. Don't hit a fellow in the head."

"Hails, does it?" cried George. "I make it. The old tree didn't mean to give us a chestnut. But when I thrash him, he 'shells out' finely."

So the boys shouted and joked and worked for some time. The chestnuts came down much faster than James could gather them up. But the sun was descending toward the hills, and it would soon be time to go home.

"You had better come down, George," said Charles. "There are more nuts under the tree now, than we can pick up before dark; and the sooner you begin to help, the more we shall have."

"Well, let me give this limb a good hearty shake, and I will come."

He gave it with a will, and the chestnuts came rattling down and bounding around James' ears in a perfect storm.

"I have sent the chestnuts down, and now I am coming after them," cried George.

"Shall I come up and help you down?" James shouted back to him.

"No, I thank you. It is easy enough to get down. It is the getting up that is hard."

"Well, don't jump on to my head, as that big burr did."

"Oh! I think I will not come down as the chestnuts do. I will take it a little slower."

And so he did. But he found that it was not always so easy a matter to get down as he supposed.

He came slipping along down from limb to limb n great glee, exulting in the thought of their success, n spite of woodchucks and Tom Greene, until he reached the lowest limb. About four feet below that, the trunk of the tree divided into two main branches. The division was so gradual, that there was hardly room for one's hand in the space between the parts, for more than a foot above the beginning

of the fork. Wholly absorbed in the chestnuts on the ground, George slipped down from the limb, with one leg in the fork of the tree. He was soon stopped, of course; and now he saw that he must climb back again several feet, to extricate his leg.

But to his great mortification and terror, he found that he could not do it. It was as much as he could do, at first, to draw up his own weight. But now he was wedged in, and it required much more strength to get up.

"What are you doing?" asked James, who was so intently occupied with gathering the nuts that he he did not look up. "Why don't you come down?"

"I wish I could. But I can't," said George, in a despairing tone.

"Can't! Why, what's the matter?"

"The old tree is too smart for me, after all. He has caught me in a trap. I have got my leg stuck fast in this crotch, and I can't get it out."

"Why don't you climb up again?"

"I can't. I have tried, but I can't stir an inch."

"Oh! yes, you can. Try again with all your might."

"I will do it. But I am sure it is of no use. My leg is as tight as if it was in a vice."

George was not a boy, however, to give up to any small difficulty. He was determined to make one more effort and do his best. He reached his arms up as far as he could, and struggled with all his might, putting the foot that was still loose against the tree, and bearing all the weight upon it he could, without slipping.

"It gives a little," cried James; "once more, with all your might, and it will come."

Encouraged by James, he made a desperate effort. He did rise a little; and he was just beginning to hope for success, when the foot, which he had placed against the tree, slipped, and he went down into the crotch tighter than ever.

"There is no use in trying," said George, in despair; "my leg is a great deal tighter than it was before. I can never get out alone, in my life."

"What shall we do?" asked James, in an excited tone. "If I could get up there I could help you, but I can't. Let me see if I can find a pole long enough to reach you. If I can, you can brace your foot upon that, and get up."

James ran all around, but he could find nothing that would answer. "Oh! dear, what shall we do? Everything is against us to-day," cried James, in despair. "I wish I had stayed at home and dug potatoes."

"But that won't help the matter, now," said George. "The question now is, how to get home, that we may dig potatoes to-morrow."

"That is a fact," said James; "but I don't see any chance for it."

"You can go," said George.

"Do you suppose I would go away and leave you

here alone! I did not know as you thought so meanly of me as that. No, I shall stay here as long as you do, if it's forever."

"Oh! no, James; I know you would not leave me. But there is no use in both of us staying here; and I am pretty sure I shall remain a while longer."

"I will not leave you. We must contrive some way to get you out."

The boys talked over all sorts of plans, but none of them promised success. George's leg was beginning to pain him very severely, and he was tired of holding on to the tree."

"Oh! dear," he cried; "I do believe I shall die here; I can't stand this much longer."

James ran around in an excited manner, looking up and down and all around to see if he could not find something that would suggest help. Finally he sat down at the foot of the tree and buried his face in his hands in perfect silence. Suddenly he jumped up and said, "I know what we will do. Grand-

father Hall lives only about a mile from here. I will run over and get him to come and help you. I can run it in fifteen minutes; and if grandfather is at home—and I know he is, for he never goes away—we'll be back in less than an hour with a ladder, or something else, to help you down. It won't be dark by that time, and we will get home yet, with lots of chestnuts."

"Well, go as quick as you can. I don't care anything about the chestnuts. If I can only get out of this trap, I shall be satisfied."

"Never fear—keep up good courage; I will surely be back in about an hour, with help to get you down."

So saying, he bounded off as fast as he could go. He was a swift runner, and strong enough to hold out for a long time. The ground was rough, but he was nimble. He jumped from stone to stone, and leaped over ditches and fences as nimbly as a deer. He came to a brook that was too wide to jump

across. But he did not hesitate to dash through it, though he got thoroughly wet. In crossing a meadow, he ran into a swampy hole, into which he sank halfway up to his arms. But he struggled through, and ran on as fast as ever.

When he reached his grandfather's, he was covered with sweat and mud; his clothes were wet, and he was so out of breath that he could hardly speak. His grandfather was just coming out of the house when James reached the door.

"Why, James," he said in surprise, "is this you? What's the matter?"

"George—is caught—in a tree—and he is—almost dead—and—I can't—get him out—and won't you—come and help me?" he cried, panting and sobbing between every word.

"What tree is it, and where is it?"

"It is the big chestnut tree, in Mr. Johnson's hollow. He has got his leg in the crotch, and can't get it out."

His grandfather knew the tree very well, and he understood the whole difficulty in a moment.

"Wait until I get a rope, and I will go with you."

The rope was soon obtained, and they started for the tree as fast as they could go. While they are hurrying to his rescue, let us return to George and see how he bears his confinement in the tree.

He watched James as long as he could see him, and when he had disappeared entirely from his sight, he began to think more intently upon his own situation, and to imagine all kinds of strange and fearful things. "Suppose James should lose his way," he thought, "and not find his grandfather's, and not be able to come back, or get home. Then I should have to stay here all night, and perhaps until I died. Perhaps his grandfather was not at home, and there was no one else who could come. Perhaps he would not come, if he was at home; and if he did come, he did not see how he could help him."

After James had been gone about five minutes,

George thought it had been an hour, and he strained his eyes to see if he could not discover some signs of his returning. Of course he could not, for James was not yet halfway to his grandfather's. The sun was now near the horizon, and he gazed upon it for a while with the most intense interest.

"I shall never see it again," he said to himself. "I know I shall not."

He was very tired, and his leg pained him severely. He was sure he could not hold out much longer. Then he tried to rouse up his courage, and hope for the best. "If James did not return, somebody would come along. When it was found that he did not come home, his father would hunt for him until he found him. He was sure he would."

The sun was now setting. Straining his eyes in the direction of the place where James had disappeared, he thought he could see him, and his heart bounded for joy. But it proved to be only a stump, with a bush beyond it, waving in the evening breeze.

Then he began to think that he was deserted, and to despair again. Thus the time dragged slowly away. To his excited feelings minutes seemed to be hours. The shadows lengthened, and the stillness, which pervades all things when the evening comes on, began to reign. He could bear it no longer.

"I will shout," he thought; "somebody may hear me;" and he began to halloo with all the strength of his voice, and to listen a moment for a reply.

"There!" he said aloud, "I heard an answer." Again he shouted, and again he heard the same reply. This he continued to do several times, before he discovered that the answer was the echo of his own voice.

"Oh! dear," he cried, "I shall drop down soon, and hang by my leg, and somebody will come along and find me dead." And in very despair he shouted again.

This time he heard a real answer. But to be sure that he was not deceived, he cried out again, at the

top of his voice; and now he heard "Com-ing!" so clear that he could not be mistaken. In a few minutes more he could see James coming in the twilight, as fast as he could run; but he was alone. This filled him with despair again.

"Couldn't you get any one to help me?" he cried.

"Yes," said James; "grandfather is coming, but he cannot run as fast as I can; so I came on ahead to let you know that he was coming; he'll be here in a minute; and, in five minutes, you will be on the ground, dancing on both legs, as gay as a lark."

"I don't see how he's going to get me down when he does come, and I don't believe he can."

"You will see that he can do it. Don't be afraid."

They could now hear the steps of the old gentleman as he came puffing and blowing along almost out of breath.

"Well, my little man," said he as he came up, "the old tree caught you nicely, didn't it?"

"It caught me fast," said George, but I don't

think it was very nice; and I am afraid it will hold me, in spite of all you can do."

"Never fear; you will find I am more than a match for the old tree, though he is the oldest. Here: can you catch this rope?"

"I will try, sir."

The rope was thrown two or three times before he succeeded in catching it.

"There, I have it," cried George; and he felt that he was safe, though he could not tell how having hold of the rope could save him.

"Now wind the rope around your body, and the tree too, so tight that it will keep you from falling, and give you the use of your hands." When this was done, he told him to throw the other end of the rope over the limb above him, and then tie it around his body, under his arms, so tight that there would be no danger of its slipping off.

In a little while George succeeded in doing this; for the hope of being saved gave him new strength

"Now untie the end you wound around the tree and your body, and let it drop down to us."

This was soon done, and now he could see how they were going to help him.

When they got hold of the rope, the old gentleman said, "Now, George, turn yourself around as far as you can, to make your leg as loose as possible, and, while we draw on the rope to raise you up, work your leg up and down, and see if you can't get it out."

"Yes, sir," said George, "I understand, and I think I can do it."

James and his grandfather began to pull upon the rope, and lifted up the whole weight of George's body, so that he could have the free use of his hands. His leg had become considerably swollen by its confinement, and it hurt him very much to move. But with a little care and patience he succeeded in getting it loose; and by the help of those below pulling upon the rope, he got clear of the trap

"All right up here," he cried. "I am free."

"Well, then, come down. We will let the rope slide slowly on the limb, and you can guide yourself by your hands."

In a moment more George was on the ground; and so overjoyed at his release, that he could hardly contain himself.

"It is not so bad, after all, boys," said Mr. Hall. "You have met with tolerable success in gathering nuts; and you have learned a lesson that will be worth more to you than all the chestnuts the old tree ever bore."

"What is that?" asked James.

"That it is far more difficult and dangerous, sometimes, to come down than to go up."

"It certainly has been in my case," George replied. "So the old tree has taught us a lesson, as well as made us a present. But it is too bad to lock a fellow up so tight."

"He did that to keep you until your lesson was

well learned," said James. "But what a stupid fellow you must be, to require so much squeezing to get a lesson out of you!"

"That is only his affectionate way of treating his scholars. He loves them so well, that he cannot bear to let them go. But the lesson is learned, and I am out of school; and now we must go home, or our folks will think that a woodchuck has dragged us into his hole, or some other terrible thing has happened to us."

So the boys gathered up their bags and baskets. George thanked Mr. Hall, very heartily, for coming to his rescue, and they set out for home.

George's leg was so stiff and sore that he could not walk very fast, and it was quite late before they reached their homes.

They found that their parents were getting to be quite anxious about them, and they were much delighted to find them safely at home.

The boys gave the history of the day, with many

amusing comments, and after a hearty supper, they went to bed, too tired even to dream of woodchucks and chestnuts.

They were all right the next morning, and ready for work.

A few evenings after this memorable day, George came around to Mr. Hall's to make James a visit and talk over their adventures again. As they were relating one incident after another, and regretting that they did not get any more chestnuts, Mr. Hall asked them what they thought was the real cause of their want of success.

"It was Tom Greene and the lot of fellows with him," said James. "If they had not come to disturb us, we should have filled our baskets, and more too, under the one tree."

"I think it was owing to my getting caught in the old chestnut," said George. "If I had come right down, we could have gathered as many nuts as we could carry home."

"Didn't the difficulty begin before you saw Tom Greene?" inquired Mr. Hall.

"I don't know what there was that prevented us from getting chestnuts before the boys came to us," said James, "unless it was the woodchuck."

"Oh! yes," said George. "It was the woodchuck; I wish we had killed him."

"That was it," said James. "The woodchuck was to blame. If he had kept in his hole, we should have reached the hill as soon as the other boys, and had a plenty of time to get as many chestnuts as we wanted. I mean to set a trap and catch him."

"Suppose you had let him alone," asked Mr. Hall, "would he have hindered you then? Was the woodchuck to blame for your spending an hour in trying to kill him?"

"Of course he was not," said James, and George looked his approval of the answer.

"The fault was entirely your own, boys," said Mr. Hall, kindly; "and I want to have you see it,

and learn a lesson from it, that may be useful to you all your lives. You went out of your way to kill an innocent animal, and spent an hour of time, upon which your success depended, in attemping to do it. In this way you lost your opportunity; and the first false step followed you all day. Let this incident teach you, when you have formed a well-considered plan for business or pleasure, never to permit any trivial influence to delay or prevent you from accomplishing it."

The boys promised to remember the lesson; and they kept their word. And whenever, in after-life, they were tempted to turn aside from any duty or innocent pleasure, the thought of the woodchuck and the adventure of the day's chestnutting would always set them right.